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Kent on Sunday

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WEEKLY FREE NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

Mid edition No 645

EDF ENERGY London and South of England Media Awards

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Grammar system unfair to our struggling schools

WHEN the school league tables come out each year it is easy to look at the bottom half and wonder just how, in this relatively affluent county of ours, some of our schools perform so poorly.

Easy to look at the national average and ponder why so many struggle so far below it. We are quick to point fingers; teachers, politicians, funding.

But the simple truth, in the most part, is that Kent is one of the few remaining areas in the county which clings on to the selective system.

And, as a consequence, every non-grammar school has the top 20 per cent - or whatever it is - creamed off by the Kent Test.

Of course, those that are left are more than capable of performing on par or, indeed, far better than some of those 'top' grammar pupils.

But when you have the ones who are going to hit the top marks immediately whipped

away from you, you can see how they start at something of a disadvantage. Or, indeed, how they cannot be expected to post 80 per cent pass rates for the elusive five GCSEs at A*-C with maths and English. Nor, as a consequence, do you get many 'outstanding' Ofsted reports for non-grammars; purely because they can't secure the very highest marks.

I repeat these well known facts only because we should not all hold our heads in our hands at the state of

some of our schools and consider them all as 'failing'. They should certainly strive and aspire to improve and the leaders must be strong and focused, but so should the parents who send their students, and the communities which they serve. Education is all about team work. And remembering our non-selectives don't play on a level field.



Editor **Chris Britcher**

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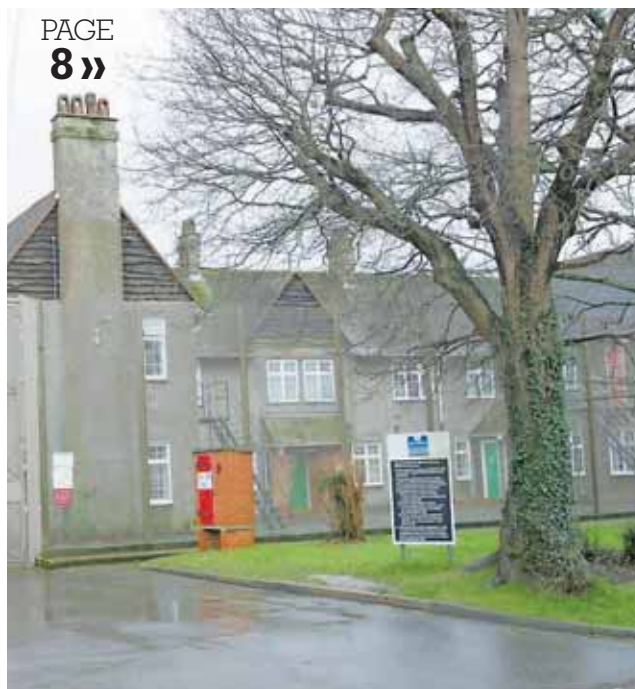
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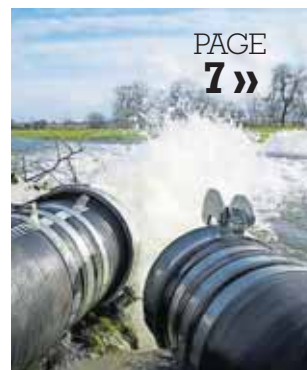
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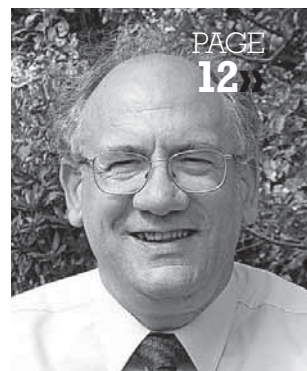
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Struggling academy hits back at league table blow

By Maria Chiorando

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THE vice principal of one of the county's poorest performing secondary schools insists its future is secure, despite a huge slump in admissions and, once again, coming bottom of the pile in the GCSE league tables.

The Marlowe Academy, in Ramsgate, was opened just 10 years ago, in a state-of-the-art building and bank-rolled by former Saga boss Roger De Haan.

But it has always struggled to hit performance targets and this week was again named the county's worst performing school.

The league tables saw just 13 per cent of students secure five GCSEs, including maths and English, at grades A*-C. The national target is 40 per cent.

More worryingly, the school attracted just 32 pupils in its Year 7 intake, despite a capacity of 180. It has led many to wonder how it can survive if the trend continues.

But vice principal Will Pemberton insists it is turning a corner.

He told KoS: "Naturally we are disappointed with the results but



DETERMINED: The Marlowe Academy says admission figures will rise in September

what everyone has to remember is that this last academic year has seen massive academic reforms.

"There are a few empty places across Thanet but a good bit of news is that we have figures of those who have applied for next year, and those figures have increased. Also, the number of students putting us as their second choice has increased which shows the local community has faith in us. "League tables just do not

illustrate the full picture."

Other schools also recording less than 20 per cent were the Oasis Academy on Sheppey, the Hartsdown Academy in Margate and Pent Valley Technology College in Folkestone.

But there was good news from Kent's super-selective grammars.

The Skinners School in Tunbridge Wells had a 100 per cent pass rate and came 17th across all of England.

The Judd School in Tonbridge came 44th, with 99 per cent.

Other top performers included Maidstone Grammar School, Dartford Grammar School for Girls and Invicta Grammar School in Maidstone, all of which were in the top 100 in the country.

■ **Education advisor Peter Read writes for KoS on schools with worryingly low intakes – full story page 12.**

Fresh fury over design of Sheppey Crossing as MP meets minister

THE roads minister John Hayes is to undertake an 'urgent review' into the design and construction of the Sheppey Crossing amid further revelations of rejected safety advice.

The controversial crossing, which saw a 150-car pile up in 2013 and the death of a woman and her young son last year, has no hard shoulder, no lighting, no warning lights, and limits visibility at its brow.

Now it has come to light that both advice from police and a report by consultants, commissioned by the Government's Highways Agency – a road safety audit subsequently obtained by campaigners – which warned of the dangers, were rejected.

It has left Conservative MP for Sittingbourne and Sheppey Gordon Henderson fuming.

He said: "These documents make clear the Highways Agency was warned about the safety risks presented by the design of the bridge and it is clear also that doing something to introduce the recom-

mended safety measures was rejected on the grounds of cost.

"Frankly, I think it is a scandal that a government department should ignore the advice of the police and its own road safety audit on such an important issue.

"The roads minister, John Hayes, has agreed to undertake an urgent review into how the design and construction of the Sheppey Crossing was conducted. He's promised also to undertake an immediate review of what steps are needed to make the bridge safe.

"I am less interested in recriminations against those who messed up the design and construction of the bridge than I am in seeing some of the safety measures put in place."

The fresh call comes after Mr Henderson was approached by former Kent Police officer Richard Denyer, who says he repeatedly raised concerns about the design of the bridge at the time, but had his concerns rejected.

College unveils its plans for brand new secondary school

ADDITIONAL pressure will be brought to bear on the likes of the Marlowe Academy after East Kent College announced it was to open a new school.

Open to students aged 14-16, and focusing on vocational courses, if it proves successful, it could draw even more students away from other secondary schools.

Called The Technical School, college principal Graham Razey, said: "We're focusing on catering and hospitality and early years and childcare because we have an excellent track record and state-of-the-art teaching facilities in both areas."

Education advisor Peter Read said: "It will certainly look an attractive option to many."

Tesco delivers another major blow to town centre store

SUPERMARKET giant Tesco has dealt another devastating blow to a town in the county after it confirmed its superstore in Chatham is to close.

The store, in The Brook, currently employs 121 staff.

It was on a list of 43 outlets Tesco will close as it looks to reshape its business amid falling profits. The store in Belvedere is also closing, and comes just weeks after it

confirmed it was pulling out of a major regeneration scheme in Dartford.

The Medway Labour group said it was "disappointed" in the decision and that it was a "big loss" to residents.

Leader Vince Maple added: "It is critical the site is not now left abandoned as we have seen with other large sites across Medway."



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Ten years for vicious robber after house raid

A VIOLENT robber who fractured a man's skull by hitting him with a candlestick and then ransacked his home as the victim's young grandchildren lay sleeping, has been jailed for 10 years.

Richard Mackie was disturbed as he attempted to break into a shed in Church Road, Swanley.

He attacked the homeowner before tying him up

with cable and knocking his wife to the floor. He then raided their home where their grandchildren, aged two and 11, were sleeping. They were unharmed and he left empty-handed.

Mackie, 29, from Clapham, was jailed at Maidstone Crown Court after being found guilty of two counts of attempted robbery and one of causing GBH.

It's back... your chance to grab free tickets to the Kent Big Weekend

By Maria Chiorando

maria.chiorando@archant.co.uk

THOUSANDS of free tickets are now up for grabs in this year's spring tourism push, My Kent Big Weekend.

Held annually as a way to give destinations an early surge of traffic and give those living in Kent the chance to visit attractions on their doorstep - and then recommend them to others - it has become a major hit.

Last year some 115,000 people applied for 20,000 free tickets - all of which are handed out by a ballot system. The tickets must be used over the weekend of March 21-22 and are only open to Kent residents.

This year more than 100 destinations have donated tickets, among them the likes of Leeds Castle, Chartwell, Howletts Wild Animal Park and Diggerland.

Sandra Matthews-Marsh is chief executive of the county's tourism champions Visit Kent, which is behind the scheme.

She explained: "This is the most



TIGER: Howletts is included

exciting weekend of the year for us, as we see thousands of people getting out and about in Kent and spreading the word about just how much we have to offer.

"We strongly encourage everyone to go on the website and take a look at the wide range of attractions."

The public can apply for as many tickets as they like, but will receive a maximum of two tickets per household if selected. There are some family tickets also available.

Tickets include tours of vineyards, the chance to learn golf, tickets to see a Kent County Championship cricket match, plus the chance to visit the likes of Canterbury Cathedral, Dover Castle, Hever Castle, the Historic Dockyard Chatham, Knole and Penshurst Place.

National Trust properties Igham Mote, Scotney Castle, Quebec House, and Chartwell are all also participating.

To see the full list of attractions taking part and how to apply, visit www.mykentbigweekend.co.uk.

The deadline for applications is February 17. Tickets not allocated will be available via the website.

Kent on Sunday is one of the event's media partners.



MODERN: How ground would look

Club unveils ambitious stadium plans

NON-league football club Ebbsfleet United unveiled multi-million pound plans to transform its historic Stonebridge Road ground this week.

Fans got their first glimpse of the plans on Monday night.

If it gets the go-ahead, it would see the capacity increased to just over 6,000, with a main stand housing all commercial and operational facilities and becoming a major landmark.

The club is owned by Dr Abdulla Al-Humaidi, the Kuwaiti businessman who is also spearheading the London Paramount project in nearby Swanscombe.

It is hoped the club will see a swell of fresh interest when the park opens, in addition to the proposed Ebbsfleet garden city.

A club spokesman explained: "The finished ground will be a 'complete building', as opposed to a collection of four stands and will be designed to meet the appropriate ground grading and safety standards.

"The new development will not only transform the stadium and the club, but will be pivotal to the regeneration of Northfleet as a whole."

Planning permission will be submitted shortly to the council.

Brewers fined after worker loses finger

BREWER Shepherd Neame has been fined £10,000 after one of its workers lost a finger after it become caught in machinery.

The Faversham firm had been prosecuted by the Health and Safety Executive for safety breaches at its site in Court Street, last June.

Agency worker Billy Scanlan, 21, from Sheerness, had entered a fenced-off section housing a running production machine, and was hosing down an area when he slipped.

His left arm instinctively shot out as he tried to regain his balance, but his hand came into contact with one of the operating parts of the machine. It immediately began to be drawn in by a sprocket at the end of a conveyor.

He needed a full amputation of the finger and repairs to his thumb and middle finger. He has been unable to return to work.

Shepherd Neame admitted a breach of the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 before Maidstone magistrates.

Pylon plans go out to public consultation

A PUBLIC consultation into the controversial Richborough Connection will get under way later this month.

The project is part of a high-voltage electricity link which pumps excess power from Belgium to Richborough, near Sandwich, called the Nemo Link.

The Richborough Connection then takes the power from where it enters the country and links it into the National Grid via a sub station in Canterbury.

But that means a 12-mile string of pylons.

A series of public events gets under way on February 10 with pop-in sessions in Canterbury, Westwood Cross and Sandwich, before a string of events in various locations from February 17.

Events will include members of the project team who will be able to answer questions and discuss concerns over the impact on the countryside.

The consultation runs until March 27. To find out the details of just where and when the sessions take place - and more about the project, see richboroughconnection.co.uk. You can also read our guide to the Nemo Link online at www.kentnews.co.uk.

Fishermen drowned after boat lost at sea

A MAJOR search mission was continuing on Friday after a Belgian trawler went missing in the English Channel.

The boat disappeared on Wednesday night after finding itself caught in gale force winds and rough seas.

It had been fishing in the Dover Strait and had four people on board - two Dutch, one Belgian and one Portuguese.

The last signal received from the boat's tracking system was some 15 miles south-east of Hastings. No distress signal was received.

A coastguard helicopter, a French search and rescue helicopter and two Kent lifeboats carried out the first search for the trawler.

By Friday morning, two bodies had been found in the sea off the coast of Boulogne along with debris from the vessel. An empty life-raft had also washed up on the French coast.

Dover RNLI crews were forced to keep suspending the search due to the poor conditions. The search was focused on French waters on Friday.

agenda

What will make next week's headlines...

Flooding conference tackling rising issues

A MAJOR conference takes place on Friday, looking at the issue of flooding in the county.

Residents, environmental experts, parish and district councillors and people working in flood-related industries will attend the event at County Hall in Maidstone. It is being jointly organised by Kent County

Council and the Kent branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England.

Topics will include the lessons learned from the devastating floods of last winter; changing climate and flood risk; safe development in areas threatened by flood; and the impact on farming.

Speakers will include Ashford



MP Damian Green, leader of KCC Paul Carter, and David Thomas, a senior analyst at the Committee on Climate Change. Maidstone MP Helen Grant will also attend.

Select committee set to discuss Manston Airport

THE transport select committee will meet at the House of Commons on Monday to hear evidence and examine the future of Manston Airport.

The stricken Thanet air strip closed back in May last year - prompting a big backlash from supporters who wanted to keep it open.

Owner Ann Gloag then sold the site on to developers who intend to turn it into a business park and residential site.

The session, at 4pm, forms part of an inquiry into smaller airports launched in July.

Evidence will be heard from the likes of Sir Roger Gale and Supporters of Manston Airport.

...also

It's a miserable Monday

EMPLOYERS may find themselves stuck this week... apparently the first Monday in February has become known as 'national sickie day'.

It is claimed UK businesses lose £34m in productivity as a result.

Change at Cranbrook?

TWO open evenings take place this month to brief parents on the possibility of lowering the age of entry to Cranbrook School to 11.

It is currently 13. Discussions with parents take place on February 10 and 24.

Station consultation

PUBLIC consultation into proposals for the Thanet Parkway railway station begin this week - pushing ahead, despite the collapse of Manston Airport.

For full details, see our special report on page 22 of this week's edition.

PCC faces police panel

KENT Police and Crime Commissioner Ann Barnes will face the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel this week.

The panel scrutinises her decisions. It holds the meeting at County Hall, Maidstone, on Tuesday at 10am.

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Prison closure shock amid staff crisis claim

Blantyre House in Goudhurst shut this week with prison officers contradicting the official reason given by ministers

By Molly Kersey
molly.kersey@archant.co.uk

PRISON officers say the decision to temporarily close the open prison at Blantyre House this week is a result of the staffing crisis – and not as the Ministry of Justice claims.

The gates at the jail in Goudhurst shut to inmates earlier this week. Capable of holding 122 prisoners, all those held at the category C/D prison have been transferred elsewhere.

Ministry of Justice chiefs claim the decision is just temporary and is as a result of the need for a refurbishment programme.

It says the jail, which houses prisoners as they prepare for their release back into the community, will re-open in the summer.

But others have suggested it may stay shut for longer.

Now a local MP has demanded an urgent meeting with the prisons minister to discuss the issue.

Staff are to be diverted to other jails in the county.

The Prison Governors' Association, (PGA) which represents senior prison staff, said it had not been consulted and was surprised when it heard the news on Tuesday.

A spokesman said: "It leaves us with some major concerns as to the under-usage of the capacity within the open estate."

"We are led to believe this decision has been borne out of the inability to recruit enough prison officers into some of the prisons in the south of England, and in particular the Isle of Sheppey in Kent, which has been widely reported by most media outlets."

Concerns have been growing about Elmley on Sheppey, in particular, which has seen mounting concern over the welfare of prisoners and safety of staff.

The PGA spokesman added: "NOMS (the National Offender Management Service) have previously stated there would be no further prison closures in this Parliament and, therefore, the PGA will seek assurances that this is just a temporary measure and there are no further

planned temporary or permanent prison closures."

A Ministry of Justice spokeswoman said: "Blantyre House prison is not being closed. Prisoners will be moved out temporarily. Some refurbishment work will take place."

However, Conservative MP for Tunbridge Wells Greg Clark said he felt uneasy by the move.

He said: "This prison has had a highly valued track record over many years of great success in rehabilitating prisoners."

"The ethos of Blantyre House is to rehabilitate prisoners close to the location of their release and this will be undermined if they are moved to another prison in Yorkshire which is what, I understand, is being suggested."

"There are many unanswered questions such as when Blantyre House will re-open and what type of prison it will be."

"I have arranged an urgent meeting with the prisons minister to discuss this vitally important matter."

This news is the latest blow to an



SHUT: Blantyre House in Goudhurst

already struggling prison service in the county.

HMP Swaleside on Sheppey was blasted after an unannounced inspection by the prison watchdog – HM Inspectorate of Prisons.

The category B prison was condemned for having far too few staff, meaning that many inmates were left locked in their cells.

The prison held more than 1,000

men at the time of the inspection and concerns were expressed that measures to prevent suicide and self-harm among prisoners were inadequate.

Sheppey's Elmley was also named as one of the worst for suicide rates by the Howard League for Penal Reform, a charity which campaigns for fewer people to be jailed.

A total of four people took their life

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CONCERNED: Tunbridge Wells MP Greg Clark is demanding a meeting

in Elmley last year, with another four dying from natural causes.

Frances Crook, the chief executive of the Howard League, said that it was "evident that people are dying as a direct result of the cuts to the number of staff, particularly more experienced staff, in every prison".

Staff shortages at Elmley also meant that exercise and education sessions had been cancelled, leaving

many prisoners locked in their cells for 23 hours a day.

Mike Rolfe is the London and Kent representative for the Prison Officers' Association.

He said: "There's definitely a massive staff shortfall in the south east region at the moment and that's driven by pay and people not being attracted to the job because of the low salaries that they are offered, es-

pecially in London and Kent.

"We have had people who have done two shifts and then rung up and said 'I am not doing that anymore'."

And Mr Rolfe explained this has a knock-on effect on the prisoners.

"Prison officers no longer have the time to talk to prisoners on a one to one basis. To be a prison officer you have to be able to have a relationship with a prisoner that comes to you.

"The resources in prisons are so scant now that obviously it's difficult for the staff to know their prisoners anymore. The ratios are meant to be 30 to one. To deal with 30 prisoners that have all got different problems and issues is very difficult if there's only one of you and you have to do other things as well.

"You have to act like their carer, their teacher and their nurse.

"It's quite essential that we are in there teaching them the skills in life to survive and the errors of their ways, and having a relationship so we can understand them.

"Prison officers now run around from one problem to the next.

"It's a real mixture for disaster at this moment in time and it's really difficult to see light at the end of the tunnel."

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Solution for Stack starts to pick up speed again

Gridlock on the roads has once again put the county's ability to deal with cross Channel traffic in the spotlight but, worryingly, there seems to be little agreement on what should be done and where, writes **Sarah Linney...**

THE end of Operation Stack is like the gold at the end of the rainbow.

We keep searching for it. We keep being told to believe we'll find it. But it seems to elude us forever.

But this week has seen two major developments in the search for an answer. Firstly, Kent County Council claimed a new lorry park would help the county's beleaguered motorists finally see an end to Stack in as little as two years' time.

Secondly, the Government confirmed it was giving £488.3 million to the South East Local Economic Partnership (Selep) and some of this cash would be used to fund KCC's proposed lorry park at Westenhanger, near Hythe.

The week began with KCC's cabinet member for transport and the environment, David Brazier, saying he hoped plans to build a lorry park in the east of the county would finally swing into action by 2017.

And he said he hoped to do something else before then to end the misery for desperate drivers trapped in queues on Kent's roads for hours be-

cause of bad weather, strike action or just general congestion at Dover.

The port is beset by traffic jams on a daily basis, with drivers advised on Wednesday to avoid the M20 coast-bound completely due to delays at the port and lorries queuing as far back as the Roundhill Tunnel.

However, Cllr Brazier has come up against opposition from the leader of Shepway District Council, who describes the Hythe plan as "bonkers" and says he would never allow it.

The county council is considering a number of sites for the new lorry park, which is expected to have around 3,000 spaces.

Westenhanger – at junction 11 of the M20 near Lympe and Hythe – seems to be the most likely, with several possible sites, including an expansion of the Stop 24 services at the junction. The council is also talking to the owner of Ashford International Truck Stop, near junction 10, to see if it can expand.

"We are looking very carefully and very urgently, and we hope to produce a lorry park by 2017 that will accommodate overnight parking," Cllr Brazier said.



STACK: When in place, Operation Stack causes huge traffic jams as non-lorry traffic tries to find alternative routes

"But a different kind of solution is required for Operation Stack and Dover and we will be making an announcement.

"Dover and Eurotunnel are getting very busy indeed with lorries trying to get into the port, and often the traffic extends out of the dock all the way to Folkestone, and along the A2 all the way to Lydden. And that's only going to get worse as the economy improves."

Overnight lorry parking is, arguably, a bigger problem than Stack, which is a bit like having a tooth out as an adult; excruciatingly painful, but comparatively infrequent.

Unwanted lorry parking, however, is a constant menace across the county, with trucks causing congestion, poor visibility and parking problems, and disturbing homeowners with engine noise and much worse.

"People in Kent get fed up with anti-social parking," Cllr Brazier said.

"People in villages will find a lorry parked outside their house with the motor running all night.

"Almost all the informal parking arrangements for lorries have no facilities, and we don't need to go into what that means."

Paul Watkins, the leader of Dover District Council, says there have been traffic problems in the town for weeks, made worse by a lack of capacity on the ferries as a number were out of action for refits or repairs.

He says lorries back up along both lanes of the dual carriageway leading to the port, which is the main road through the town, obstructing roundabouts and meaning other traffic cannot get through.

On Wednesday, he told KoS: "You can't get into Dover right now from the A20. The lorries should park on the left so the rest of the traffic can flow through, but no-one seems to enforce this. The Highways Agency, the police and the port really need to get their act together.

"This is a national issue. The UK economy relies on Dover and the Channel Tunnel to keep the nation's

trade moving, yet time after time we are left isolated by the lack of resilience in the road network and a lack of investment to support the nation's premier roll-on-roll-off port.

"Dover is as important to the national economy as Heathrow Airport."

Eurotunnel is widening its approach road at junction 11a of the M20 from three lanes to seven – five for lorries and two for passengers – meaning around 200 trucks can be stored there when Operation Stack is on.

The work is expected to be completed by June.

Director of public affairs John O'Keefe told KoS: "We mustn't make this just a Kent problem. This is the national economy growing.

"Manufacturers up north can't sell their goods if they can't get through. We need to push for debate at a national level."

And as Julie Maddocks, a spokeswoman for the Freight Transport Association, points out, the situation is unpleasant for lorry drivers too.

"There isn't enough being done for HGV drivers. They need safe, secure lorry parking areas where they can take their legally required breaks, and there aren't enough of these across the whole country," she said.

She says the need for a lorry park is unquestionable.

"Nobody wants it in their back yard, but it's a necessity. Lorry drivers need those facilities to enable them to do their job and the government needs to fund those facilities," Ms Maddocks said.

"The Government and local government need to get round the table and get these things built, as the situation right now is causing havoc and has an impact across the whole of Kent.

"Last week there were 2,500 trucks in queues on a daily basis. Those lorry drivers are trying to do a job. We had delays of up to nine hours – their hours are then gone and they can't do a day's work."

However, David Monk, the leader of

Shepway District Council, says the proposals are "preposterous".

"This is a knee-jerk reaction to the recent Operation Stack and will be not be tolerated by local people or Shepway council," he said.

"Kent County Council originally proposed a 450-space lorry park close to Stop 24, but reduced this number to 300 following its own environmental concerns and our objections. Now we are faced with a bonkers proposal to create a 3,000-space park that will be used at most four times a year; it's ridiculous.

"We have identified an unused strip of land between the motorway and the railway line, with the potential for up to 800 spaces.

"We are happy to be part of the possible resolution to Operation Stack. But we are not going to have all the county's problems dumped in our district."

And Inspector Anthony Dyer, of the Kent Police Roads Policing Unit, said: "We do appreciate that traffic congestion into Dover does cause frustration. This is understood by all the appropriate authorities.

"This matter is currently managed by Highways Agency, Port of Dover Police, Eurotunnel and Kent Police. It is primarily the responsibility of the Highways Agency to make sure traffic can flow easily on major roads and motorways, and as such they work closely with the Port of Dover Police to achieve this."

A spokesman for the Port of Dover says it plans to create a new waiting area for 220 more lorries, and was also deploying more police to help control traffic.

Campaigners have been calling for a solution to Stack, and to nuisance lorry parking in the county, for more than a decade.

Plus, there remains the risk that even if a park is built, lorry drivers will not want to pay to use it.

Cllr Brazier added: "This is hugely damaging for the Kent economy and a massive inconvenience for people, and we are determined to find a permanent solution."



Clouds gather for major schools as admission numbers plummet

Education advisor **Peter Read** casts his eye over the latest figures for our schools and warns many of them face an uncomfortable future as the number of students enrolling shows a worrying decline

IN 2013, Kent County Council took the decision to close Chaucer Technology School in Canterbury, as it had sharply falling numbers and a forecast intake of just 57 for September 2014.

The school had already reduced its capacity from 235 to 150, but this would still leave 62 per cent of places empty.

I now have school census figures for September 2014 showing four secondary schools in an even worse situation than this.

In 2013, these four schools again had the highest vacancy rates in Kent, while in 2012 the only school that separated them was Walmer Science College, which KCC closed at the end of that year because of falling numbers.

Three of these four schools, Marlowe Academy, Oasis Academy Hextable, and High Weald Academy, are probably safe from direct KCC intervention because of their academy status.

However, they will all have problems of viability, as low numbers work through.

Ofsted previously placed all three in 'special measures', and although improved, they are still suffering from their reputation.

The fourth is Pent Valley School, Folkestone, which possesses a 'good' Ofsted assessment, but whose troubles include expansion by more popular neighbouring schools.

Unsurprisingly, heading the list is Marlowe Academy whose predicament I wrote about on my website (www.kentadvice.co.uk) a few weeks ago. It now has just 32 students in Year 7, leaving vacant 83 per cent of its 180 places. [See page 5].

Realistically, it will be impossible for the academy to offer a differentiated and appropriate course for students at GCSE in three years' time.

Next is Pent Valley Technology College, with 68 per cent of its Year 7 places vacant. The school has fallen annually in popularity, in spite of a 'good' Ofsted in October 2013 with just 58 students in Year 7. There are major contributory factors out of the school's control, as explained below.

High Weald Academy in Cranbrook has had difficulty in attracting students since it went into special measures in 2010, in spite of becoming an academy sponsored by the Brook Learning Trust, and two improved Ofsted.

This year's total of 61 Year 7 students, leaving 66 per cent of places empty, is similar to previous years, so one wonders what else the academy can do to attract numbers.

Oasis Academy, Hextable, has 63 per cent of places vacant, but is the only one of schools to have picked up, rising to 55 students from a low of just 38 in 2013, again following a

failed Ofsted. The improvement was mainly due to a temporary executive head turning the school round and earning a positive inspection report in preparation for a takeover by Oasis Academy Trust.

However, the school's situation is still precarious and like the others, 2015 admission numbers will be critical.

Any school can cope with a sharp fall in numbers for one year, but what sets these four apart is the sustained low numbers; in schools that will shortly be over half empty as the low year groups work through, financial pressures increasing and the curriculum offering trimmed.

The other school with over half its Year 7 places empty is St Edmund's Catholic School in Dover, in trouble since its failed Ofsted two years ago, although it has recently been classified 'requires improvement'.

It has 60 per cent of its places vacant, losing over half its intake over the past three years, but is seeking salvation by becoming a sponsored academy in the Kent Catholic Schools Trust.

It also suffers from a similar local problem to Pent Valley.

The pattern of secondary admissions in Kent is changing fast as academies can now increase their planned admission numbers without regard to the effect elsewhere.

There is a strong argument by many that poor schools that fail to improve should go to the wall, but this does not take into account the effect on the unfortunate students caught in the middle of closure, as seen at Chaucer and Walmer Science College.

When the latter closed in 2013 (failed Ofsted and low numbers), its remaining students were transferred into Castle Community College, Deal, only to see Castle plunge from 'outstanding' to 'special measures' seven months later, the school and its new students going through turmoil as it attempted to recover.

Government argues that failing schools should be turned into academies whose freedom from local authority control will see them get stronger, but what if they are already academies?

More important than the status of the school is its leadership; and there are many examples of schools that have been rescued from difficult circumstances by outstanding leaders.

The second major factor for change



SHORT: just how long, asks Peter Read (left) can the Marlowe Academy (above) continue with such low admission figures? And it is far from alone in feeling the strain

in Kent is the expansion of grammar

schools, some of whom are setting their own tests, or else finding higher proportions of children to be of grammar school ability through decisions of appeal panels.

Folkestone School for Girls increased its capacity by 15 places to 180 for 2014 entry, absorbing 77 girls who passed the Shepway Test alone with a further 44 girls on appeal.

One group with whom this policy will be popular are the families of the girls accepted by Folkestone Girls, but Pent Valley's future is now in threat

as a consequence.

Folkestone Academy was one of the most popular schools in Kent in 2011 but has since been falling in popularity. However, for 2014 entry, it still decided to increase its intake by 30 children to 270, potentially damaging Pent Valley further.

In the end, Folkestone Academy started in September with 20 empty spaces in Year 7, the very real problem for both schools being Folkestone School for Girls.

The national controversy over free schools failing to fill their places hardly applies in Kent.

Both Wye School and Trinity School, Sevenoaks, are full; Wye

drawing mainly from the potential of Towers School, Kennington, leaving the latter with just 135 of its 243 places filled.

Trinity has a wider catchment because of its church requirements for 45 of its 90 places.

The third free school, Hadlow Rural Community School, with its agricultural focus, initially planned to offer just 30 places, but then took 50 students from across a wide rural area.

■ **Peter Read is a former head teacher and runs Kent Education Advice. For more information on his services and education insight: www.kentadvice.co.uk.**



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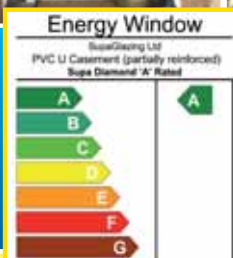
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Top 10: Laughs and drama as county is host to TV greats

How often have you watched your favourite TV show and recognised the location? Kent has become very used to attracting the camera's eye, so we thought it worth highlighting ten of the best shows filmed right here on our doorsteps.

By Chris Murphy
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

OUR appetite to get closer to the sights and scenes we witness in our favourite television shows no sign of slowing.

In Chatham, a tour of the historic dockyard gives visitors the chance to see where

popular BBC drama *Call the Midwife* is shot and gives an insight into the filming.

But did you know that, over the years, Kent has played host to locations in a host of the best-loved TV dramas and comedies?

Gabrielle Lindemann is director of the Kent Film Office, which looks to promote the county to filmmakers: "As a large county, Kent has many diverse locations including

rolling green countryside, 350 miles of coastline and a variety of architectural styles in both urban and rural settings. Its proximity and accessibility from London is merely an added benefit for productions."

We take a look at just 10 of the best-known shows shot in and about the county... but if you know of others don't hesitate to let us know, email editorial@kosmedia.co.uk.



What? ONLY FOOLS & HORSES
Starring? David Jason and Nicholas Lyndhurst
When? 1989
Where? Margate

THE nation's favourite TV show set its famous 1989 Christmas special around a day trip to Kent - and it remains one of the best-loved episodes.

The Jolly Boys' Outing

saw the entire cast head to Margate for a weekend of fun. The Galley Pub on the Thanet Way (which has since been turned into apartments) saw Del Boy and co rest up after

their coach breaks down, while location scenes were filmed across the town including the train station, Dreamland, the beach and the town centre.

What? SOUTHLIFFE

Starring? Rory Kinnear, Sean Harris

When? 2012

Where? Faversham

A CHANNEL 4 drama with more than a passing nod to some high profile massacres, it was a fictional account of when a gunman goes crazy in a small market town.

Faversham, under a different name, was selected as the key location and was featured extensively.

Oare Marches, Faversham Creek and the recreation ground, all ap-

peared, as did scenes shot in Whitstable, Sittingbourne, Canterbury and Teynham.

Filming took eight weeks and, it is estimated, generated around £500,000 for the county's economy.

The show was critically acclaimed, and prompted the town to run its very own Southcliffe tour in a bid to cash in on its fame.

What? DR WHO**Starring?** Tom Baker, Jon Pertwee, William Hartnell**When?** 1963-1989**Where?** Dungeness, Chislehurst and many others

WHEN you're a Timelord with a penchant for Earth and its inhabitants, it is perhaps little surprise that Kent has heard that familiar noise of the Tardis more than once or twice.

From the earliest

incarnation of the Doctor – William Hartnell – to Sylvester McCoy, the TV show made plenty of use of varied locations in the county.

From Botany Bay, the Red

Sea Forts off the coast of Whitstable, Dover Castle, and a girls' school in Hawkhurst, and the shingle banks of Dungeness, the Doctor has seen it all. And then some.

What? SOME MOTHERS DO 'AVE 'EM**Starring?** Michael Crawford**When?** 1975**Where?** Sheerness/Herne Bay

Another Christmas special saw one of the 1970s' best-loved comedy creations – Frank Spencer – head our way.

Played by Michael Crawford (who grew up on Sheppey and would go on to become a musical superstar), the hapless Frank filmed scenes on Sheerness beach which saw a driving lesson go from bad to worse as the car ends up in the sea.

Crawford famously did all his own stunts in the show and a large crowd gathered to watch the filming.

Another scene saw the car stuck on the opening Sheppey Bridge.

It was not the only episode of the show to feature Kent. The very first episode, filmed in 1972, saw Frank and his wife Betty (Michele Dotrice) stroll down Herne Bay High Street.

What? THE TUNNEL**Starring?** Stephen Dillane, Clémence Poésy**When?** 2013**Where?** Folkestone/Dover

THE Tunnel was an Anglo-French collaboration and adaptation of the hugely successful The Bridge drama, which initially saw a body discovered on the bridge which links Sweden and Denmark.

The Tunnel, however, saw a body

found right on the divide of the French and English sides of the Channel Tunnel.

Unsurprisingly, there was extensive filming in and around Folkestone and northern France, with the language switching between French and English to appeal to an audience on both sides of the Channel.

It was a thoroughly engaging, if rather grim, drama which shot scenes in Canterbury, Dover, Folkestone, Swale and Thanet, with the likes of the Turner Contemporary and Westwood Cross shopping centres featuring too.

Shown on Sky Atlantic, talks are on-going about a possible second series.

**What? FRAGGLE ROCK****Starring?** Fulton Mackay, Jim Henson**When?** 1983-87**Where?** Gillingham

FRAGGLE Rock was a big hit back in the day – and the latest to emerge from Jim Henson's puppet workshop.

For British viewers, the Fraggles worked beneath a lighthouse on a remote lump of Scottish rock.

In reality, those scenes featuring the late great Fulton Mackay (best known for his role as Mr Mackay in Porridge), were shot in sunny Gillingham.

They were shot at

the studios of Television South in the town – long since demolished and now the home of the Aldi supermarket store.

When Mackay died just before filming on a third series started, he was replaced by John Gordon Sinclair.

**What? DARLING BUDS OF MAY****Starring?** David Jason, Catherine Zeta Jones, Pam Ferris**When?** 1990-92**Where?** Pluckley

COMEDY producers love Kent. The Darling Buds was famously shot at Pluckley, turning what was once regarded as Britain's most haunted village, to a must-visit place for fans.

Launching Catherine Zeta Jones to Hollywood stardom, David Jason was back filming in the county. And frequently locals were used as extras.

Scenes were also shot on the Leas at Folkestone.

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What? LITTLE BRITAIN

Starring? David Walliams, Matt Lucas
When? 2003
Where? Herne Bay

HIGHLY-acclaimed and hilariously funny, the British public fell in love with the comedy creations of David Walliams and Matt Lucas.

And they selected Herne Bay to shoot scenes featuring their character Emily 'I'm a lady' Howard, who was filmed parading along the seafront and a host of other parts of the town.

**What? TIPPING THE VELVET**

Starring? Keeley Hawes, Rachel Stirling
When? 2002
Where? Whitstable, Chatham

MENTION this 19th century musical hall drama, and most will remember it for just one thing – those raunchy scenes that caused so much controversy in 2002.

Long before Keeley Hawes took to apparently time travelling in Ashes to Ashes, she was teamed up, shall we say, with Rachael Stirling.

The production team cameras were in Whitstable, where Stirling's character Nancy Astley lived with her family, before she leaves for London. Chatham Dockyard also doubled for London street scenes, as it does in current BBC hit Call the Midwife.

OTHER NOTABLE PRODUCTIONS

JULIA Dorrington at the Kent Film Office told us: "Mr Selfridge filmed in Dover by South Foreland and also used Upper Road at St Margaret's. They also used the Historic Dockyard Chatham to build and film the exterior of the Selfridge's Store.

"The Birds of a Feather BBC comedy from the 1990s, featuring Pauline Quirk and Linda Robson as two sisters who move in together after both their husbands ended up in jail following an armed robbery attempt. All of the prison scenes were filmed at Maidstone Prison throughout the series, and the prison was also used for exterior scenes."

But there's also appearances for Kent in The Mystery of Edwin Drood, Emma, Hercule Poirot, True Love, The Hollow Crown, Agatha Christie: The Moving Finger, Inspector Lynley Mysteries: Natural Causes, Hancock and Joan, Cape Wrath, Half Broken Things, CATS Eyes, Perfect Scoundrels, Downton Abbey and Foyle's War.

What? TOP GEAR

Starring? Jeremy Clarkson, James May, Richard Hammond
When? Numerous occasions
Where? Sheppey, Chilham, Dover and others

LONG before they took to annoying international audiences and governments with their outrageous humour, Jeremy Clarkson, Richard Hammond and James May, made regular trips to the county to shoot scenes.

They were on Sheppey to watch The Sweeney being filmed and try their hand at choreographing a car chase.

And few fans will forget their efforts to drive to the coast - and then cross the Channel to France in their specially converted vehicles. Or, for that matter, the coastguard which had to come and rescue them.

Clarkson was also filmed driving a swish sports car into Chilham's picturesque square.



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DRILLING: Rule changes could protect the county from future plans for fracking... but attempts to get the process stopped for the foreseeable future were rejected by Westminster

Relief for campaigners in fight against the 'dangers' of fracking

The race for shale gas has been slowed in a move likely to protect much of Kent. **Jamie Weir** reports

MENTION the word fracking, and be prepared for impassioned debate from both sides of the argument.

And with an election in the offing, it seems, the government has decided to give some ground to those fighting against the hugely controversial process.

Hydraulic fracturing, or fracking as it is more commonly known, involves drilling into shale rock before pumping chemicals and water into it at extremely high pressure to fracture the rock, allowing gas or oil to flow out.

Campaigners against the process say that there are numerous dangers from fracking, with potential for chemicals used during the process to pollute the water supply.

But after debate in Westminster this week, areas of outstanding natural beauty (AONBs), sites of special interest and national parks will no longer be open to any sort of fracking, as well as any extraction in areas which could impact on water supplies.

A number of areas in east Kent – in particular around Tilmanstone, Guston Court Farm, Shepherdswell and Woodnesborough – have been identified as suitable locations.

New rules, which were part of the government's Infrastructure Bill, would have helped to 'fast-track' the fracking industry in the UK, something the government has previously stated as their aim.

On a visit to Kent in 2013, Prime Minister David Cameron told Kent on Sunday: "We have to recognise that a fracking revolution has taken place in the US and we ought to be thinking about it here."

"Recent reports have shown we

may have twice as much shale gas as previously thought and so this is an industry we should be encouraging.

"We want to make sure it's an industry we encourage for community benefit as well."

But after Tory backbenchers, alongside Labour supporters, revolted against the government, ministers were forced to alter the proposals, giving away significant concessions to the campaigners.

One of the those fighting against

“We fear fracking for shale gas would create pathways for the flow of noxious gases and liquids into the aquifer”

Graham Warren,
CPRE Kent

plans to frack in the east of Kent is Whitstable resident Julie Wassmer.

She says the speed with which the government were looking to force fracking through ignores the dangers of the industry.

She told KoS that she was glad the amendments had come, as it was, she claimed, a sign the wheels were coming off the fracking industry bandwagon. Critics though, will disagree.

She said: "So many different reasons which the government have been pushing are beginning to fall apart. It's great news that there are so many influential people who have decided to dispute the government's line on fracking."

"Economic arguments and energy security arguments are being round-

ly debunked, and now we have the Environment Audit Committee – a cross party group – taking the government to task over the impact that extracting unconventional gas would have on our climate change policy.

"That's fantastic, as it shows people that there are some very knowledgeable and influential people who are opposed to fracking."

"It's clear the government backed the wrong horse in the race for energy, with increasing numbers of MPs, including Conservatives, coming forward to support their constituents against this toxic industry. With or without their support, campaigners will fight on until we gain an outright ban on fracking as exists in France."

The amendments to the bill should safeguard areas of outstanding natural beauty (AONBs) such as the Weald AONB which straddles Kent and Sussex.

The British Geological Survey said last year the Weald could have around 4.4 billion barrels of shale oil under it.

The amendments also ruled out fracking in areas where drinking water is collected. In water-stressed Kent, that is likely to make fracking impossible across significant chunks of the county.

CPRE Kent, the county branch of charity, the Campaign to Protect Rural England, has been one of the strongest critics of fracking near to aquifers which supply much of the county's water.

Graham Warren is the chairman of the group's environment committee. He told KoS that there were serious concerns about pollution from the hydraulic fracturing process – some-

thing which he said could be devastating in the county.

He said: "We know that in east Kent, to reach any gas bearing shales it would be necessary to drill through 250m of the chalk of the North Downs."

"These shales lie within a dense network of geological faults and we fear fracking would trigger further movement on these faults and create pathways for the flow of noxious gases and liquids into the aquifer."

"We also have serious doubts about the effective regulation of the operation, which would require 24-hour on-site monitoring by competent, independent inspectors."

"We question how this would be achieved when the regulatory bodies are already insufficiently staffed and facing further cuts."

The changes to the Infrastructure Bill will also slow the exploration for shale gas and oil, making it more time consuming for companies to develop areas.

One way it can do this is by requiring a year of background monitoring in the area where companies are looking to frack are operating.

But despite the victory, the changes didn't go as far as many campaigners had wanted.

A cross-party group of influential MPs had demanded the government rethink its strategy on fracking, stating that a moratorium – a complete stop – needed to be placed on the method, until more details were available about its potential impacts.

The Environment Audit Committee stated in a report presented to parliament there were 'huge uncertainties' about the environmental impacts of fracking for shale gas, also arguing that it was totally at odds with UK climate change

policy to cut carbon emissions.

Its chairman, Labour's Joan Walley MP, said the ban in AONBs was great news, even though the moratorium had been ignored.

She said: "Ultimately fracking cannot be compatible with our long-term commitments to cut climate changing emissions unless full-scale carbon capture and storage technology is rolled out rapidly, which currently looks unlikely."

"There are also huge uncertainties around the impact that fracking could have on water supplies, air quality and public health."

"We cannot allow Britain's national parks and areas of outstanding natural beauty to be developed into oil and gas fields."

Ken Cronin, chief executive of UK Onshore Oil and Gas (UKOOG), which represents the oil and gas industries, said he was glad a total stop had been avoided, and that the industry now just needed to be allowed to get on with the job of exploration.

He told KoS that wells had already been sunk in the country, many of which were in AONBs, stating that none had created any 'noticeable environmental issues'.

He said: "It is good news that MPs have rejected the misguided attempts to introduce a moratorium on hydraulic fracturing."

"Most of the amendments agreed are in line with best practice in the industry or codify the directions of regulators, which the industry would naturally comply with."

"We now need to get on with exploratory drilling to find out the extent of the UK's oil and gas reserves."

■ What do you think? Join the debate and share your views. Email us at editorial@kosmedia.co.uk.

Week ending February 1, 2015 **19**

Why leaving the EU would devastate our rural landscape

Groups unite to highlight 'serious risk' to both the county's rural economy and the very way our countryside would look if we opted to leave the EU

By Jamie Weir

jamie.weir@archant.co.uk

SOME of the county's biggest rural campaign groups have rapped out a warning - leave the EU and we risk it having a major negative impact on Kent's countryside.

They claim not only would the rural economy be dealt an almighty blow, but we could also see yet more of the rolling hills we all treasure being lost to development.

Those are the comments from a gathering of representatives from the communication teams of the likes of the National Farmers Union (NFU), the Campaign to Protect Rural England, East Malling Research and the Kent County Agricultural Society.

Anti-EU campaigner Ukip, however, has described the claims as "political scaremongering".

Meeting at Hadlow College, near Tonbridge, it was the latest in a regular get-together to present a united front on common themes.

And with 85.5 per cent of the coun-

ty designated as rural - and a general election approaching which is likely to see Europe as a key plant for some parties - the discussion quickly turned to the impact should the UK decide to opt out.

Isobel Bretherton, from the NFU, insisted if the UK was to abandon its links with the EU, it would hit hard.

She told KoS: "We get out more than we put in. Europe is our largest trading partner, and farming is at the backbone of the food industry."

"If we pulled out of the EU, what would we gain in Kent? It could be really serious for the rural economy."

And that, says Pat Crawford from Hadlow College - a leading land-based sector college near Tonbridge - could be hazardous for the landscape in the county.

She told KoS that large swathes of the countryside are carefully managed environments, with farmers ensuring that landscapes are cared for.

She said: "Much of the county has been shaped by farming, and farmers are looking after our countryside."

"The reason Kent is so beautiful is because the land is being used, and is

being pro-actively managed to be productive. If that rural industry were to suffer, then what might be the impacts for the landscape?"

"Could there be more development as a result? If there were, the countryside would surely suffer."

That, says Rachel Ledwith from the Gleaning Network, which works to reconnect the general public with where their food comes from, could have an adverse impact on tourism in the county, an industry which is worth over £2.5 billion and provides 30,000 jobs in Kent and Medway.

She said: "Kent is very much about the countryside, so what would the impact be on the county if we were to withdraw from Europe."

"Would that have an impact on people coming to the county to visit? It's a growth industry, and walking away from Europe could cause serious issues."

But it's not just indirect impacts which could rock the rural economy, which, in Kent is worth a massive £5.4 billion.

Food production, both on farms, and elsewhere in the supply chain,

contributes over 12 per cent to the county's total economy and employs 15 per cent of Kent's workers.

Gill Collins works for the Kent County Agricultural Society which works to promote Kent's agricultural produce.

She said if the UK were to withdraw from the EU, the impact on that contribution to Kent's economic prosperity could be widely felt.

She said: "Farmers don't like change, and introducing new schemes would be very difficult, take time and could cause real issues in Kent's rural economy."

"If farmers aren't able to work in certainty, it could stop investment in businesses, and in extreme circumstances, see farms forced out of business."

"That would obviously have an impact on the rural economy, with less money and employment a symptom."

The NFU's Ms Bretherton echoed that sentiment, telling KoS that there could be 'unforeseen consequences' which might lead to a period of stagnation in Kent.

She said: "If the European rule book was ripped up, it would take

some time to create a new one so that we could trade with Europe again.

"That could lead to a massive period of stagnation, which could have a real impact on farms, and the landscape in Kent, and across the rest of the country."

"Trade would be impacted, and the



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RISK: Could leaving EU pave way for more development?



CHOICE: Should we stay in or out of the European Union?

rural economy would likely suffer as a result."

Agricultural and horticultural pest and disease research could also suffer in Kent as a result of walking away from the EU, according to Dr Ursula Twomey who works at East Malling Research, a horticultural and agri-

cultural research institute.

Dr Twomey said: "If we were to go out on our own and leave the EU, we'd need a lot of innovation.

"To be able to innovate, you need funding. But the truth is that funding is being squeezed, so we need to go to the EU to get grants, and cash for our work.

"If we weren't part of that group, then we would struggle.

"Also, a lot of the research we carry out is done in collaboration with other groups across Europe. If we had to stand alone, we wouldn't be able to do that."

Ukip thinks otherwise. A spokesman told KoS: "Britain is a huge export market

for many European countries. Anyone who says that this trading would cease if we left a political union is just scaremongering.

"The truth is that demand beats any political ideology, and as long as British people still wanted products from Europe, and vice versa, our trading relationship would not be damaged.

"In fact, quite the opposite – without EU regulations and restrictions, our farmers and fisherman would be more competitive."

■What do you think? Share your views and join the debate. Write to us or send us an email direct at editorial@kosmedia.co.uk.

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Parkway: Is station still on track?

After the collapse of Manston Airport many thought Thanet Parkway would go with it. But it's back...

By Sarah Linney

sarah.linney@archant.co.uk

PEOPLE in Thanet are being asked to give their views on a new railway station which would take travellers to London on the high-speed line in just an hour.

Thanet Parkway station at Cliffsend would serve Discovery Park and the Manston airport site, and Kent County Council says it hopes it will improve job opportunities for people in the district.

The unstaffed, two-platform station, whose exact location has not been decided, is expected to cost £14 million and open in early 2019.

It will have a large car park and will be served by an access road connecting it to the A256 and the A299.

But is there any point to the station if Manston airport no longer exists? Cllr David Brazier, Kent County Council's cabinet member for transport and the environment, says yes.

"Manston, even a year ago, was a tiny operation and was not the only objective of the scheme," he said.

"Its objective has always been to support Discovery Park, where about 2,500 people are employed. Now Manston has been bought, it will probably be developed for business and perhaps homes, and we hope the site can flourish and be a big employer.

"East Kent has lots of exciting development opportunities, but its long commuting times to London and poor connections to the rest of Kent have meant it hasn't been the first choice for new business investment. This is a fantastic opportunity to generate jobs, unlock development and boost investment in the local economy by improving connectivity and access to the capital."

Thanet has seven train stations – but Cllr Brazier said the station could offer something the others didn't.

"We have the high speed train, but the difficulty has always been that once you get to Thanet, Ramsgate station only has 55 parking spaces," he said.

"It's the plague of the area that people who commute out of Ramsgate can't park at the station, so they park in residential streets. At this station there will be all the parking in the world.

"It will enable people to travel by rail from London straight to Discovery Park or the Manston site without getting clogged up in traffic in the centre of Ramsgate, which gets congested and polluted.

"Yes, you can get off at Sandwich for the Discovery Park but you go via Dover and you stop at every station on the way."

North Thanet MP Sir Roger Gale was also insistent that the station was needed as the campaign to keep Manston airport open is still ongoing.



SUPPORT: Fast access to London and the Discovery Park has plenty of supporters - including MP Sir Roger Gale

"If you are coming down from London to do business in Thanet you want a fast train," he said.

"The station is also needed for the airport. We want people to be able to get from London to a station on the edge of the airport and get a shuttle bus to the terminal – the existing stations are in the wrong place.

"We are expecting an announcement on the airport from the Department for Transport within the next couple of weeks. The Prime Minister has made it plain that he supports the airport, the Department for Trans-

port wants it back, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills wants it back, the Chancellor wants it back. What more do you want?"

To give your views on the new station, visit kent.gov.uk/thanetparkway any time between tomorrow (Monday) and Friday, March 27.

There will also be opportunities to find out more on the following dates:

- Thursday, February 12, noon to 8pm, Cliffsend village hall.
- Tuesday, February 17, 3pm to 7.30pm, Ramsgate train station.
- Thursday, February 19, noon to

8pm, Sandwich Guildhall.

■ Saturday, February 21, 10am to 6pm, Ramsgate Town Council meeting room.

■ Tuesday, February 24, 10am to 5pm, Discovery Park Enterprise Zone.

■ Thursday, February 26, 2pm to 5.30pm, Minster-in-Thanet Library.

■ Wednesday, March 4, 2pm to 8pm, Herne Community Centre.

Or write to Freepost MA629, Thanet Parkway Public Consultation, Transport Strategy, 1st Floor, Invicta House, Maidstone ME14 1BR. or email thanetparkway@kent.gov.uk

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Drugs debate film focuses on reform

Molly Kersey heads to university for documentary screening

A HARD-hitting documentary examining the argument for legalising drugs was screened at Canterbury's Gulbenkian Theatre on Tuesday – followed by a debate on the pros and cons.

The film, *Culture High*, examines the situation primarily in the US but also features interviews filmed in Canterbury and Whitstable.

Featuring the likes of Virgin boss Sir Richard Branson and rapper Snoop Dogg, among those interviewed were professor of criminal justice Alex Stevens, from the University of Kent.

The film's associate producer Jason Reed, from Sittingbourne, is the executive director of LEAP (Law Enforcement Against Prohibition) UK – a group of senior police, MI5 and undercover drugs detectives who are trying to raise awareness of the need for drug reform.

The film examines the arguments over the legalisation of marijuana.

Mr Reed said: "The discussion is going to be happening, especially this year and next year."

The documentary explores what sparked the 'war on drugs' in Ameri-

ca, which has been raging for decades, and the subsequent effect it has had on people who are criminalised.

The film, which is from the makers of *The Union: The Business Behind Getting High*, premiered at the famous US Raindance Film Festival.

It looks at beliefs that surround the effect marijuana has on health, such as claims it causes schizophrenia.

Speaking on what was a pro-reform panel, Mr Reed says that there will be a lot of factors behind being diagnosed with a mental health issue, and solely blaming marijuana is not the way to go.

He explained: "You are possibly doing more harm because you are negating all those other factors that certainly do play a part."

Mr Reed introduced the film, which preceded a criminology panel discussion hosted by Professor Stevens.

He was joined by Drs Caroline Chatwin and David Redmond.

Speaking about the film, Dr Chatwin, a senior lecturer in criminology, whose work involves analysing drug policy at a national and international level, said: "It really follows the way the drugs issue is tied up with the me-

dia, the money, the politicians.

"I believe that a lot of the arguments in this are valid for other drugs too.

"There's hope of change but there's still a really long way to go and it still is very much uncertain as to whether that change will happen. It would be very easy to set it all back and to stop the change from happening."

However, the view is not shared by many. As reported in our special feature in last week's Kent on Sunday (which you can access via our website www.kentnews.co.uk), the chorus for reform faces a tough task to convince those who believe reform could bring significant issues.

Rick Bradley from KCA, the county's drug, alcohol and mental health organisation, works with children aged between 10 and 17, educating them about the dangers of drugs.

He said: "There's a really broad range of young people, some who would definitely be deterred from using substances because of the law, but there will be a lot of people who just don't factor that in.

"Some people will still be happy to use substances and will get a criminal record because their prefer-



FILM: Virgin boss Sir Richard Branson appears in the movie

ence is cannabis rather than alcohol. "But if we legalise them, does that mean that we are going to be opening the doors to make substances more acceptable?"

"I think legalisation could send out

the wrong message."

■ **What do you think? Share your views.** Email us editorial@kos-media.co.uk or write: **The Editor, KoS, Kent House, 81 Station Road, Ashford TN23 1PP.**

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LES MISERABLES:

A ReCall production of the famous musical at Southbrough's Royal Victoria



Fighting to avoid the final curtain

After a Tunbridge Wells theatre closed, the spotlight is on how to keep them afloat, writes **Sarah Linney**

CAMPAIGNERS fighting to save the Royal Victoria Theatre in Southbrough made a formal plea on Thursday night for it to be spared.

The Friends of the Royal Victoria submitted a proposal for the future of the theatre, and a supporting petition signed by thousands of people, to the town council.

It proposes the drama groups and other organisations which use the space would unite and take over the running of the building.

The theatre, which opened in 1900, closed this month and is

set to be demolished because the town council says it cannot afford to carry out the £200,000 of repairs the theatre needs.

On the other side of the county, Thanet District Council announced this week it was looking for a lessee to take over the running of the 18th-century Theatre Royal in Margate to save it maintenance costs of £100,000 a year.

They are just two examples of growing pressure on small theatres that are seeing funding and grants slashed as central Government tightens its purse strings.

But the campaigners say the

closure of the Southborough theatre, near Tunbridge Wells, will mean the loss a vital resource – and theatre groups will also suffer badly from the loss of the venue.

Adam Brackenborough, director of ReCall Studios, which provides theatre training for young people, said: “We haven’t got another venue to go to in Tunbridge Wells that’s going to be right for us.”

“The Vic is the right size for us and it was affordable for us. We were able to run the bar and put the takings back into the group – every penny helps – which wouldn’t happen at

other venues.

“My students are really upset. We have been there for eight years and we love it. It is a safe environment for the children, and it is an old style theatre with character, which you don’t get to see anymore; and the kids get to see what a working theatre is like.”

“We have built up an audience who want to come and see us in the theatre and we have got to build that up again if we go to another venue. Some people would follow us if they had to travel into Tunbridge Wells, but some wouldn’t, and people in Southborough wouldn’t have anything on their doorstep.”

And he said it was wrong to claim that the theatre was unsustainable.

“The theatre can pay for itself. It has so much more potential and could be marketed a lot better.” Mr Brackenborough added.

“For it to be a profitable business, it needs to be more of a venue for the public – it needs an event organiser and to be used full time.

“But there was no advertising for it as a hire venue, there were no pictures online and it hadn’t been updated for years.

“It is needed. I just don’t think they have been trying.” The proposal is for the

different groups that use the theatre – which number around a dozen – to run it between them, hiring it out for parties, meetings and functions.

“Up till now the programme has been about musical theatre and dance, but we want to introduce things like band nights and live music,” explained Adele Ebbage, the chairwoman of the Friends of the Royal Victoria Hall and a member of the LAMPS theatre group.

“Under the council, you couldn’t hire it for less than four hours, so you couldn’t hire it for an hour to do a class. We want to offer a flexible tariff.

“It will be self-sustaining – we want to be able to make it run with no expense to the taxpayer.

“All the productions are supported by volunteers, so the concept of running the theatre is something we are used to – and we have had 67 volunteers from the community come forward and say they want to help.”

She said Southborough needed its theatre, not only economically, but emotionally.

“It’s the heart of the town. There’s not a lot else in Southborough – the pub has gone and that whole street has demised. If the theatre goes, it will be the last thing

that generates energy,” Ms Ebbage said.

“And it is economically short-sighted because the theatre brings business to the town. Closure will have a real knock-on effect.

“Amateur groups are going to go under as alternative venues out of town will be way too expensive.

“I would say 95 per cent of people want to keep the theatre – and people are getting quite angry, because they don’t want this, but no-one is listening. There is no democracy anymore.

“We are trying to take the politics out of this and get the council to see the community benefit, which is what a town council should be about; asking ‘what are the benefits of this?’ Instead of thinking about the reasons why you shouldn’t do it.”

Council chairman Peter Oakford told the BBC earlier this month that the council had been struggling to keep the theatre open for eight years.

“We haven’t taken this decision lightly, but we have to be realistic,” he said.

He was unable to respond when repeatedly contacted by KoS.

And the Royal Victoria Theatre is far from alone in finding the current climate challenging...

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But he isn't complaining. The artistic director of the Astor Theatre in Deal – capacity 120 to 170 people – has worked night and day to make the venue a success and is rightly proud of what he and his team have achieved.

"Most theatres get some sort of

subsidy from the local council or the Arts Council, but we don't.

"We exist on the income from the box office, the bar and room hire – but this is east Kent, it's not one of the most affluent parts of the world, and we can't really charge the sort of ticket prices that we need to.

"But up to a point I would rather not have the public funding because it always comes with strings attached – they tend to tell you what you can programme.

"It's a struggle, but we are okay and have been able to get quite a lot of grant money for specific capital

projects, such as new lighting, a professional recording studio, a sound system, and refurbishing the kitchen so we can open a café."

The theatre is open seven days a week and is used by around 25 groups and classes.

It also hosts vintage markets – including an antiques market every weekend – a music school and an apprenticeship scheme for young people who have been unemployed.

"We have applied to the Arts Council and been turned down –

maybe we're not big enough," said Mr Tillitt, who has been running the theatre for five years.

"But what appears to happen is that you start working when you stop receiving public funding.

There is a certain complacency that creeps in if you know that no matter how many people you get through the door you can still pay your wages, whereas we are totally dependent on it.

"I programme things that people want to see and we have a wide variety of different events and different activities."

However, he is hoping he can secure some funding either at county, district or town council level to support the theatre's community work.

"The groups that come in here can't pay what it costs to open the building and provide heating, lighting and the technical backing they need.

"We are looking for £15,000 a year, which in the grand scheme of things is not a lot. But politicians don't feel that the arts are really worthy of public support, as it doesn't translate into votes."

TOM THUMB THEATRE, MARGATE

"MY family thought it wasn't a good idea for the theatre to close, so we all clubbed together to buy it."

If there's one thing you can't accuse Jessica Jordan-Wrench of, it's a lack of commitment. When the tiny Tom Thumb theatre in Margate was threatened with closure six years ago, the actress and her family were so horrified by the prospect that they took it over – and have been making a success of it ever since.

Miss Jordan-Wrench's aunt, The Bill and EastEnders actress Frankie Jordan, was the main impetus behind the takeover and she and one of her cousins initially managed the theatre.

Then a couple of years ago, Miss Jordan-Wrench and her partner Eoin took it over – moving down from London to do so.

"We love it, but it's a struggle," she explains. She also runs her own theatre company, Dot Dash. We pretty much run it on a volunteer basis. We occasionally employ people behind the bar, but it's pretty much always just me and Eoin running it – and we both have other jobs.

"We do everything from running the bar and programming to brochures and distributing flyers, although we are very big on the fact that if we do have to employ someone for something, we pay them decently. Last winter, when there were the storms, we had a leak in the roof and it was raining inside the theatre. We would wake up in the night and get a taxi there in the pouring rain to check there weren't any leaks and cover things over."

Events at the Tom Thumb – originally a Victorian coach house – range from the Margate Sounds experimental music night and weekly film nights to a recent performance of the Vagina Monologues, starring Pauline McLynn and Nancy Dell'Olio.

Like the Astor Theatre in Deal, the Tom Thumb receives no regular public funding.

"We got some funding from the Arts Council and Kent County Council to develop new work – so we have world-renowned companies coming to make work in Margate," Miss Jordan-Wrench said.

"We get grants every so often but it takes a long time to do the funding applications – when we have time to do them.

"I don't know how we survive really. We just about break even from ticket sales and the bar. Every month we say we're going to start paying ourselves soon, and then we find we need a new roof or something.

"We do seem to always end up being all right somehow but it is a constant worry."

But she says the theatre seems to have a special place in the hearts of people in Margate.

"We have been very lucky. The theatre seems to have captured the attention and love of a lot of people – it's quirky and it's quite embedded in the community."

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OnTheMarket.com – the new property hub

Archant is throwing its weight behind a major portal which will give you even more choice when it comes to finding, and buying, a new home

COMMUNITY media group Archant - publisher of this newspaper - has announced plans to support a major new property portal, OnTheMarket.com, which went live on Monday.

More than 4,000 estate and letting agent offices are supporting the venture, the consumer portal brand of Agents' Mutual, an agent-owned business designed to offer more choice into the property portals market beyond players such as Rightmove.com, Zoopla, and Primelocation.

Archant is one of the largest publishers of regional newspapers and lifestyle magazines in the country with more than 50 newspaper titles and associated digital media, including its own property portal homes24.co.uk powered by Zoopla, which it will continue to partner with, to provide its own property search facilities, accessible via all its newspaper websites.

However, the business said it would back the new portal with advertising space across all Archant newspapers and magazines to promote the OnTheMarket.com brand in the lead-up to its launch and beyond.

Johnny Hustler, Archant executive director, said: "The property market continues to be a key focus for us, both in print and online.

We want to have the best local content. Estate and letting agents hold the key to some of the most valuable content in the form of the details of the properties they are marketing for their clients.

"We've seen more and more



DIRECTOR: Johnny Hustler

of our agent advertisers signing up to OnTheMarket.com and we envisage it growing rapidly in the market.

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"Agents have fantastic content. We reach property-

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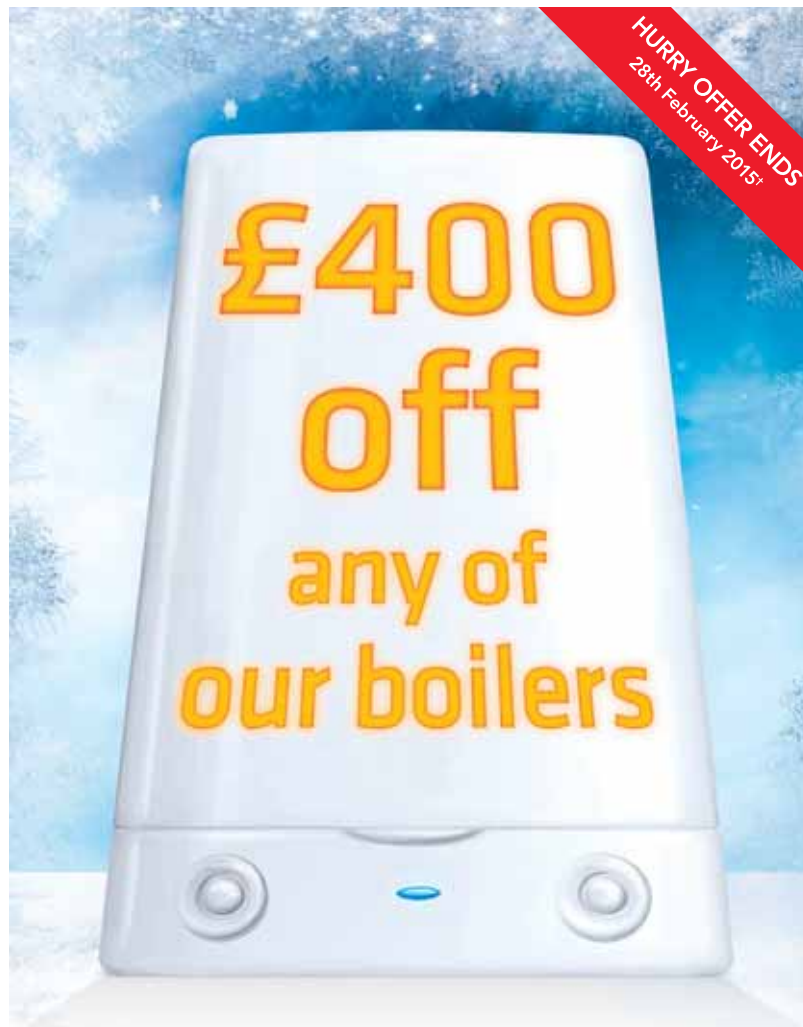
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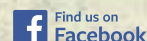
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Historic market to benefit from coastal funding

A 13th-century market, created with cash from Henry III, is to receive more state aid after being named to benefit from a fund for coastal towns

AN HISTORIC market in Gravesend is to be made fit for purpose for the 21st century after receiving a share of a major central Government cash pot.

And coastal areas in Thanet are set to benefit too.

They will cash-in on a share of the £36 million Coastal Communities Fund, designed to assist coastal areas, stimulating growth and employment opportunities.

In Gravesend, the council will receive £1.8 million to refurbish and revitalise the Borough Market – an historic site in the town centre between the old High Street and Queen Street – and one of the oldest charter markets in England.

It was first granted a charter back in 1268 when a grant was given by Henry III to Robert de la Parrock to establish the market site.

The money will be used to transform it into a retail centre for creative businesses and services. This will help 40 businesses and create 35 jobs.

Gravesham Borough Council leader John Burden said: "It is very good news that the merit of the council's initiative to refurbish one of the oldest charter markets in England has been recognised with this award.

"The council will now be able to progress our plans to rejuvenate and transform the market so it can once again take its place at the very heart of this riverside heritage town."

"It is very good news the merit of the council's initiative to refurbish one of the oldest charter markets in England has been recognised"

John Burden, the leader of Gravesham council

The Coastal Communities Fund was created in 2012 to invest in coastal towns to help them achieve their economic potential, reduce unemployment and create new opportunities for young people in their area.

Gravesham Borough Council applied for this lottery funding after commissioning the plans last year.

The good news extended to the east of the county too, with Thanet District Council also receiving a share of the pot.

It was handed £247,000 to develop tourism along Thanet's coast in Margate.

It will help draw visitors throughout the year and encourage people to stay. Three direct jobs will be created for Thanet council, and 12 indirect jobs.

Council leader and cabinet member for tourism, Iris Johnston said: "This particular funding will enable us to

maximise Thanet's unique assets.

"The aim of the project is to enable residents and visitors to engage with the coastline and heritage assets, allowing them to take greater pride in and learn more about Thanet.

"This crucial funding will also resource the creation of a support network to capitalise on the fantastic volunteering spirit of locals and also mean new people are introduced to Thanet's stunning coastline."

Making the grant announcement, coastal communities minister Penny Mor-daunt said: "Backing our coastal towns so they can rise up and drive forward their local economies is a key part of our long-term economic plan to secure a brighter future for Britain.

"This money will help create jobs, boost skills and open up new business opportunities, benefiting hardworking people in coastal communities across the country.

"These fantastic projects demonstrate the creativity, enterprise and passion needed to help seaside towns become year round destinations that people are proud to live and work in."

Other big winners across Britain were Blackpool's famous illuminations which is getting nearly £2 million to help create new light shows; the Tate St Ives receives £3.8 million for an extension to the art gallery; and Scarborough's historic market will get £2.7 million for refurbishment.



FUTURE: How Gravesend's market will look when improvement scheme is carried out



COASTAL: Thanet will use money to help tourism drive

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Poignant display marks the 50th anniversary of death of a legend

Fifty years ago, millions watched the funeral of Sir Winston Churchill. **Maria Chiorando** visits his home

FIFTY years ago this weekend, the nation was in mourning.

Its war-time leader – a man whose influence and inspiration helped guide us to victory over the Nazi threat – had died the previous weekend. His state funeral, the last afforded to someone who was not the monarch, took place on January 30, 1965.

And after a week of remembering the great man, it is worth reflecting – and celebrating – his remarkable connection with the county.

He famously said that 'a day away from Chartwell was a day wasted' – Chartwell was his ornate family home near Westerham, where he would draw inspiration during times of conflict and spend his final years.

There he painted and enjoyed the company of his pets.

And it is marking his life there and its role in his remarkable



BELOVED:
Chartwell

career, with a special exhibition.

Born in Blenheim in 1874, he had a short military career before becoming the Conservative MP in 1900, for Oldham. He had two stints as prime minister, and is best remembered for his leadership during the Second World War.

He suffered a severe stroke on January 15, 1965, and died on January 24 shortly after 8am in his London home. He was 90 years old.

He died with Lady Churchill, their three children and two grandchildren at his bedside. His beloved marmalade cat Jock at the foot of his bed.

FINAL FAREWELLS

FOLLOWING his death on January 24, Sir Winston's body lay in state in Westminster Hall.

Between January 27 and 29, over 320,000 members of the public queued for miles to file past his coffin.

Notable public figures including the Queen, heads of state, politicians and prime ministers came to pay their respects. His widow, Lady Clementine Churchill visited daily.

On January 30, he would make his final trip. A sombre procession through the streets of London in a state funeral. A rare honour for one not of royal blood.

It was the largest state funeral the world had ever known, with

representatives from 112 nations and some 350 million people across Europe tuning in to watch the event broadcast live on television.

The Duke of Norfolk had been responsible for organising the funeral, which he started planning in 1959, under the code name 'Operation Hope Not'.

It was a complicated affair, including a mile-long procession, which led the coffin, draped in a Union Jack, between Westminster and St Paul's Cathedral.

The route was lined with 3,500 soldiers including mounted cavalry, the Guard's Regiments and sailors.

After the service at the cathedral, the procession continued to Tower

Pier, where the coffin was carried on to the boat Havengore, to set sail to Waterloo Pier.

A 19-gun salute was fired as the coffin was carried aboard. In a touching display, the cranes in London's dockyards were bowed in salute as the coffin travelled down the river.

Sir Winston was taken to his burial place at St Martin's Church near Bleinham by train from Westminster Station.

He had planned to be buried alongside his beloved pets at Chartwell but changed his mind in his final years.

In the words of Lady Clementine Churchill: 'It was not a funeral, it was a triumph.'

WONDER OF CHARTWELL

WHEN the Churchill family first purchased Chartwell, its main attraction was a remarkable view across the Weald. It would go on to inspire the great leader when at his lowest ebb.

He bought the family home in 1922 and spent two years renovating the property, making it modern and extending it.

After the war, in 1946, it became apparent they could no longer afford to remain in the home they loved. But courtesy of his wartime heroics, a group of wealthy businessmen came to his aid and purchased the estate.

The deal was simple – they could stay until their deaths, paying only a nominal rent – and then the property would be handed to the National Trust, to preserve for the nation.

However, following his death in 1965, his widow presented the

property immediately to the trust. It has been a tourist attraction ever since.

To mark the anniversary of his death, the National Trust is hosting an exhibition called Death of a Hero. While the house is closed until February 28, the exhibition is open now until November 1.

Death of a Hero looks at the passing and impact of Sir Winston. It examines his death, the aftermath as the world mourned, the funeral and his legacy.

There are 60 items of interest on show – around 50 of which have never been seen before by the public. These include the last known photograph taken of Sir Winston, newspaper cuttings and the Old Glory flag that was flown half-mast over Washington on the day of Churchill's death, and was later presented to Lady Churchill.

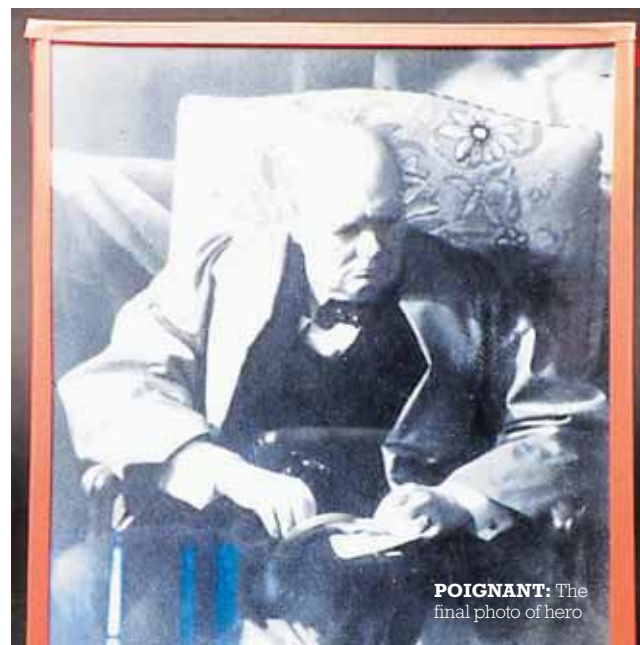
Beryl Nicholson is a volunteer

house steward at Chartwell, a member of the historic research team and one of nine volunteers who each researched different themes for Death of a Hero over a period of three months

She said: 'After many hours reading archive letters, memos and newspaper cuttings, I was particularly touched to discover the attention Lady Churchill paid to those people who wrote to her or contributed to the state funeral in some way.'

'I uncovered frequent memos between her and Anthony Montague Browne [Sir Winston's private secretary] making sure that suitable replies were sent to every letter, and many were personally written by Lady Churchill herself.'

'She also arranged for individual gifts to be given to everyone who helped make the funeral such a special occasion.'



POIGNANT: The final photo of hero



FINAL: Funeral route from Radio Times

A PAWS FOR THOUGHT

WHEN Lady Churchill decided to present Chartwell to the National Trust, earlier than anticipated, it came with a very specific request.

They asked that a marmalade cat, with four white paws and a white bib always be in comfortable residence at the house, a homage to Sir Winston's favourite pet Jock – named after one of his private secretaries – Sir John 'Jock' Colville, who gave him the cat.

Jock was an 88th birthday gift, a rescue animal adopted from the RSPCA.

He was so loved by Churchill that meal times were delayed until Jock took his place at the table, and they often travelled to London together.

Although Jock was only two when Sir Winston died, he spent the rest of his life at Chartwell, until he died in 1974 and was buried in the pet cemetery on the estate.

He was succeeded by a series of Jocks.

Now Jock VI lives at Chartwell – a rescue from Croydon Animal Samaritans. He was found roaming the streets as a kitten, covered in paint – a true rags to

riches story.

He is said to enjoy afternoon naps, sustainable tuna fish, Persian rugs and cuddles, but has a fierce dislike of heights, lightning, being on his own and opera – particularly the works of Puccini.

In return for a life of luxury on the estate, Jock VI has a list of duties he is expected to carry out. These include roaming around Chartwell and being petted and photographed by visitors.

He must also, according to the National Trust, 'act as a good ambassador by exercising a friendly and courteous manner'.

He will remain at Chartwell for his whole life, or for as long as he is happy to do so.



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POIGNANT: The cast of *To Kill A Mockingbird*



Race case classic takes wing once more to our theatres

Harper Lee's Deep South drama, *To Kill A Mockingbird* returns to the county

THE STAGE adaptation of Harper Lee's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *To Kill A Mockingbird* visits the Orchard Theatre as part of a UK tour in March – with a Kentish actor taking to the boards.

This production captures the warmth and poignancy of the classic novel.

Set in the Deep South, the plot sees racial injustice envelop a small-town community.

Through courage and compassion, lawyer Atticus Finch seeks the truth, and his feisty daughter brings new hope to a neighbourhood in turmoil.

Jamie Kenna from Tunbridge Wells plays Heck Tate.

His theatre credits include *Life of Riley*, *Communicating Doors* (both Stephen Joseph Theatre) and the West End production of *War Horse* (New London Theatre). Mr Kenna

has also appeared on screen in *Stormbreaker*, *Green Street* and *EastEnders*.

Daniel Betts will play Atticus Finch alongside Zackary Momoh as Tom Robinson, and Christopher Akrell as Boo Radley.

Original cast member and composer Phil King will reprise his role.

Full casting includes Geoff Aymer (Reverend Sykes), Victoria Bewick (Mayella Ewell), David Carlyle (Nathan Radley/Mr Gilmer), Susan Lawson Reynolds (Calpurnia) and Christopher Saul (Mrs Walter Cunningham/Judge Taylor).

Jemima Bennett, Ava Potter and Rosie Boore will share the role of Scout whilst Harry Bennett, Arthur Franks and Billy Price will share the role of Jem.

The role of Dill Harris will be

shared by Leo Heller, Connor Brundish and Milo Panni.

During the show's visit to Dartford, audiences of *To Kill A Mockingbird* are offered various additional opportunities to get involved.

There will be a Page to Stage on March 4 at 11am, which is free to ticket holders.

This is an opportunity to explore the path from page to production. The Page to Stage is pre-bookable only and school groups and young people are especially welcome.

On March 5, there will be a Post Show Talk following the 7.30pm performance, free to ticket holders.

Directed by Timothy Shearer, *To Kill A Mockingbird* originally opened at Regent's Park Open Air Theatre's 2013 season to critical acclaim and sell out performances.

Due to popular demand, it

returned to conclude the 2014 season at the Open Air Theatre before heading out on its first UK tour.

Proving its success across every art form, the 1960 novel was awarded the Pulitzer Prize, followed by the film adaptation in 1962, which won three Oscars out of the eight it was nominated for.

To find out more about the play, visit www.tokillamockingbirdplay.com.

The Orchard Theatre is committed to providing 'access for all' and is very pleased to be holding an Audio Described performance of *To Kill A Mockingbird* on March 7 at 2pm.

The show will be at the Orchard Theatre from Tuesday 3 – Saturday 7 March.

Visit orchardtheatre.co.uk or call 01322 220000.

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Carrack brings classic sound for another tour

By Maria Chiorando

maria.chiorando@archant.co.uk

SHEFFIELD-born singer, songwriter and former frontman of Ace, Squeeze and Mike & The Mechanics John Carrack is touring again – and will stop off in Tunbridge Wells next month.

His back catalogue includes favourites like *How Long*, *Tempted* and *The Living Years* and his songs have been performed by some of the biggest names in music including The Eagles, Diana Ross and Tom Jones. He has also recorded and toured with Elton John, Eric Clapton and BB King.

He told KoS: "It was my dream to become a musician.

"I've been performing all my life, because it was the only thing I could do. I wasn't great at school, and I wasn't good with my hands, but I had some musical talent, so I worked hard, and it's been my life. It's like the old saying 'the harder I work, the luckier I get', but I do still feel fortunate that I am able to do something I enjoy.

"It is very hard work though, it's competitive, and you have to practice. I grafted, endured, and



all that stuff."

Fans can look forward to a mix of music at the performance.

Mr Carrack said: "I enjoy playing the old classics as much as the newer material.

"I still feel excited and invigorated when I step onto the stage - performing is not a huge rush for me, more a satisfaction at a job well done. I'm not showbizzy, and I don't have a schtick, I'm just coming out and playing a good, honest set."

In terms of Kentish links – he

has a couple.

"I have some friends in the county," he explained.

"Most notably the boxer Barry McGuigan.

"He has been known to show up at my gigs, but he's not said whether he's coming to this one or not yet."

Mr Carrack will be appearing at Tunbridge Wells Assembly Hall on February 11 as part of a tour.

For tickets, call the box office on 01892 530613 or visit www.assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk.



SOULFUL: Mr Carrack on stage

Comedic mayhem in town

COMEDIAN Tom Stadel will take to the stage at The Orchard Theatre, Dartford.

His show, described as 'perfectly crafted mayhem' takes places on April 2.

Call 01322 282063 to book.



The Selector in Chatham

SKA band The Selector will perform in Chatham during their UK tour.

Fronted by Pauline Black, the band will be supporting the release of their new album *Subculture* – due to be released in the spring.

They will play at The Britannia Theatre on March 1.

Indie rock band to play

PLATINUM-selling band The Vaccines will be performing at The Leas Cliff Hall, Folkestone, on April 5.

It is the only Kent date to feature in their UK tour.

To book, call 0844 871 3015.



Classic jazz in February

THE Humphrey Lyttelton Band will be playing in Folkestone.

The line up sees Jimmy Hastings and Robert Fowler on sax, Ray Wordsworth on trombone, Mike Henry on trumpet and Ted Beament on the piano.

For more information, call 01303 277175.



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Steeleye Span hit the road

FOLLOWING last year's release of their 22nd album, Steeleye Span will be embarking on a UK tour and will perform at the Theatre Royal, Margate, on February 24. Call 01843 792795 to book.



Buble tribute sings the hits

A TRIBUTE act to Michael Buble will be adding romantic sparkle to a Valentine's event at Margate Football Club.

Tribute singer Jason Allen will perform Buble's hits at the event, which includes a three course meal.

The event is being held on February 13.

Satire and songs in play

AWARD-WINNING comedy One Man, Two Guv'nors will be at The Churchill Theatre, Bromley, from February 3 to 7. Tickets start at £10.

To book, visit www.atgtickets.com/bromley.



Festival looking for entries

THE Create music festival, which is celebrating its 20th anniversary, is looking for a mixture of acts to take to various stages this year.

The free summer festival, organised by Ashford Council, will take place on July 26.

The closing date for entries is noon on March 13. You can apply at www.createfestival.co.uk.

Paddy on road to somewhere with Folkestone stand-up gig

By Maria Chiorando

maria.chiorando@archant.co.uk

ONE of the country's best-known comedians, Paddy McGuinness, has announced a brand new UK tour for 2015 and 2016 – and he'll be stopping off in Folkestone in October.

The star of Take Me Out will return to his performing roots, with his first stand-up comedy tour since 2011.

After numerous sell-out tours and best-selling DVDs, Mr McGuinness' long awaited return to stand-up will see him perform 50 dates across the UK with another hotly anticipated show, Daddy McGuinness.

The comic is raring to get back to where he belongs – on stage, making people laugh.

He said: "I'm really looking forward to being back on tour – I've missed it."

"I've got a great new show planned – Daddy McGuinness."

"Among many other things, I'll be sharing several stories about becoming a first time Dad and parenthood."

The comic, who is originally



PADDY POWER: The comic's back on the road

from Lancaster, married his wife Christine in 2011.

Two years later, the couple announced they were expecting twins in the summer.

Their twins, Leo Joseph and Penelope Patricia, were born in July 2013.

During an appearance on The Jonathan Ross Show, McGuinness described fatherhood

as "the most fantastic thing ever".

Mr McGuinness is probably best-known for his work with Peter Kay.

The pair worked together on the series Phoenix Nights.

This then led onto more work, and their show Max and Paddy's Road to Nowhere.

Paddy McGuinness performs at The Leas Cliff Hall in Folkestone on October 15.

Tickets are available in person from the venue box office.

You can also buy them by phone 0844 871 3015 or online at www.atgtickets.com.

There is a booking fee added at time of purchase.

A limited amount of tickets and up close and personal packages are available. Call 0844 826 282 or visit www.ticketmaster.co.uk.

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Why part-time dieting is still favourite for many

The 5:2 diet has been popular for several years now, but the craze shows no sign of abating just yet...

HOW'S that New Year's resolution of losing weight coming along?

If the sweet treats have crept back into your daily routine, or Dry January has become awash with weekend wine, don't despair.

In 2012, there was a point when everyone seemed to be talking about the 5:2 diet.

More of an eating plan than a diet, it simply involves two 'fasting' days a week, when your calorie intake needs to be a maximum of 500 for women or 600 for men, and five blissfully normal definitely-not-on-a-diet days.

Three years on and the New Year bookshelves are still groaning under the weight of new titles; Kate Harrison's 5:2 Good Food Kitchen, for one.

And that's because it works.

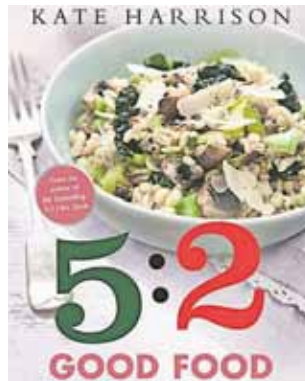
"From the first day I did it, I realised it was the easiest approach to controlling my weight I'd ever tried," notes Harrison.

"I lost 31lbs, gained energy, confidence and a complete loss of guilt about food.

"And it inspired me to write four books. Now, I'm not much of a calorie counter.

"Weight Watchers put paid to that about 15 years ago, when I found myself totting up how many 'points' my enviably slim and non-dieting lunch date was consuming, while staring miserably at my Crispbreads.

"But working out the tastiest way to consume just 500 calories – and sticking to it by telling myself I can



RECIPES: The 5:2 has been popular for several years

eat whatever I want tomorrow – is something I can just about manage, especially if it's only for two days out of seven.

"On a weekly basis, you're slashing at least 3,000 calories from what you'd normally eat, which is equal to a pound of real weight loss, not water loss," says diet and fitness expert Laura Williams (www.laurawilliamson-line.co.uk). "

"It's a simple question of sums and creating deficits."

I'm only on week two, but am happy to keep it up – and losing 2.5lbs in seven days has certainly spurred me on.

I would recommend avoiding 'virtually calorie-free' (and also completely tasteless) noodles, and discov-

ering low-calorie foods you don't dislike.

A massive salad hits all the right notes, Marks & Spencer's mini hot cross buns are a perfect 100-calorie fix and there's an array of low-cal ready meals on the market that are a lot more tasty than you think – and make it easy to keep fasting, even when you're too busy to cook.

Try it – you might like it.

And if you do, and you find your scales are suddenly pointing at your goal weight, you can drop down to one fasting day a week to keep it all off.

That's what Harrison did, after dropping from a wobbly size 16 to a slender 10-12 – which she still is – three years ago.

Comedian to perform

STAR of Mock the Week and Live at the Apollo Stewart Francis will bring his new stand-up tour to The Assembly Hall Theatre, Tunbridge Wells.

Francis has devoted the show, Pun Gent, to his father.

It will be performed on May 29.

For more information, or to book, visit www.assemblyhalltheatre.co.uk or alternatively call 01892 530613.

Miles Jupp films DVD

TOP comedian Miles Jupp will be filming a DVD at a show in Margate.

The star of TV hits including Rev and The Thick of It, he is also a regular panellist on Have I Got News For You, Mock The Week and Radio 4's The New Quiz.

He will be performing at the Theatre Royal to record the live DVD on February 15.

The performance starts at 7.30pm and tickets are £15.

Moshi Monster visit

PINK Moshi Monster Poppet will be taking a trip to The Entertainer in County Square, Ashford, on February 7.

The store will be hosting the visit between 10am and 3pm, and there will be friendly staff on hand to guide children and their families through the store.

The Moshi Monsters game launched in 2008 and has more than 80 million registered users in 150 territories worldwide.

Classic hits in Dartford

ROCK 'N' ROLL variety show That'll Be The Day will be returning to The Orchard Theatre, Dartford, with its brand new show.

This year's new production features a fresh line up of classic gold hits from the 1950s, '60s and '70s, as well as more comedy.

For more information, or to book, visit www.orchardtheatre.co.uk or alternatively call 01322 220000.

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Getting closer to nature in Canada

TRAVEL REVIEW: Canada

By Chris Wiltshire

ALL the old feelings of nervous excitement from my one and only parachute jump come flooding back as I look down from the top of the Canadian Rockies with my heart in my mouth.

I thought my days of living on the edge were over, but 25 years on from launching myself out of a plane, I prepare to career down Marmot Basin in the heart of the majestic Jasper National Park, Alberta.

This time, however, I'm three times higher at more than 6,400 feet and I have my son, James, alongside me on his very first skiing trip.

It could not have been more different from my own first foray into skiing as a schoolboy in the French Alps.

Slushy nursery slopes, wet, ill-fitting boots and endless queues for the ski lifts put me off the sport for years.

It's therefore a pleasure to experience skiing as it should be, despite a cold snap that brings temperatures plummeting to an eye-watering -20C.

All the skiing starts and ends next to the nursery slopes, making it an ideal place for families to enjoy the sport.

And there's little chance of getting lost, as I once did after going down an unfamiliar run in the Italian Dolomites, two years previously.

It's also possible to come down from the summit via a variety of runs.

There are easier greens all the way up to the nausea-inducing double black diamond runs.

This means that families of mixed abilities can go up on the high speed quad lifts together, choose one of the 86 slopes to travel down and then meet up at the bottom.

Most skiers stay in Jasper, a quaint, friendly town that is just 20 minutes from the slopes.



NATURE: Enjoy the thrilling landscapes - and the tasty beverages



It is, in fact, virtually the only place to lay one's head in a national park the size of the Netherlands.

Jasper is reputed to have half the visitors of Banff but with four times the wildlife, and I can see what they mean.

From our base at the renowned Fairmont Lodge, where the Queen and Prince Philip stayed in 2005, we see elk, coyote, big-horned sheep, stags and the friendliest red squirrels

you could wish to meet.

During the summer months, black bears roam around the town, attracted by the smell of sausages on outdoor barbecues, and there are also said to be around 1,000 grizzlies in the park, as well as wolf packs.

However, attacks on humans are extremely rare.

The wildlife is fiercely protected, with penalties for hunting severe, so we have to head west into British Co-

lombia - an hour-and-a-half drive and one time zone away - to experience that iconic pastime of winter sports, dog-sledding.

It's fitting that our dog-sled trip should be called Moonshiners of Whiskey Creek.

The closest we get to a shot of the hard stuff though, is a warming cup of apple cider over an open campfire.

Our excitable pack of six huskies sweep us deep into the heart of the

TRAVEL FACTS

■ Chris Wiltshire was a guest of Travel Alberta. Visit www.travelalberta.co.uk for information on the destination.

■ Ski Independence (www.ski-i.com; 0131 516 4005) offers seven-night holidays to Jasper from £1,197pp (two sharing), including flights from London to Edmonton, car hire and accommodation at Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge.

spectacular Valemount countryside, with snow-laden fir trees and steep-sided mountains making it a veritable winter wonderland.

It's another first for James and he relishes the experience, while I'm happy to bury myself in the sled's sleeping bag as temperatures dip to a toe-curling -30C.

By the end, we have worked up quite an appetite, although back in Jasper we are rather spoilt for choice.

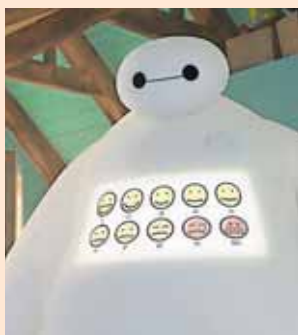
We have already sampled the delights of Papa George's and Lou Lou's Pizzeria, not to mention the fabulous breakfasts at Fairmont Lodge, with its stunning views of Mount Edith Cavell and Whistler Mountain.

We make our way to the Jasper Brewing Company.

It turns out to be one of the best decisions of the holiday, with delicious beer-battered fish and chips washed down by heavenly ales that have been brewed in the pub's basement, from Honey Bear Ale to Blueberry Vanilla Ale.

After all the fresh air and exercise, I sleep like the proverbial log that night - and dream of returning with the rest of the Wiltshire clan to this heavenly part of the world.

Film Reviews by Damon Smith



BIG HERO 6
(PG, 108 mins) Animation/Sci-Fi/
Action/Comedy/Drama/
Romance

NEVER underestimate the soothing power of a hug.

With one simple squish, you can provide comfort, encouragement

or a simple how-do-you-do that transcends a thousand well-chosen words.

Big Hero 6 is the cinematic equivalent of a warm hug, embracing the old-fashioned family values of the Walt Disney brand alongside cutting-edge computer technology that audiences now expect to dazzle their senses.

Directors Don Hall and Chris Williams marry dizzying action sequences that look even more spectacular in 3D to an emotionally rich story of a lonely boy's unshakeable bond with his self-inflating robot protector, recalling the magical 1999 animated feature The Iron Giant.

KINGSMAN: THE SECRET SERVICE
(15, 129 mins) Action/Drama/
Comedy/Romance

DIRECTED at full pelt by Matthew

Vaughn, Kingsman: The Secret Service is an outrageous James Bond-esque caper with an unpleasant and sadistic streak.

This hare-brained tale about a secret organisation of impeccably tailored British agents dedicated to world peace lampoons the conventions of the spy genre with an arched eyebrow.

"Nowadays, they're all a little serious for my taste," opines Colin Firth's lead operative about modern-day spy films, one of several self-referential winks in Vaughn and Jane Goldman's script.

This stomach-churning slaughter reaches a nauseating crescendo in a Southern church where Firth's good guy squares off against a congregation of brain-washed bigots, racists and homophobes, who apparently deserve to die in lurid close-up while Lynyrd Skynyrd's Free Bird strums on the soundtrack.



INHERENT VICE
(15, 149 mins) Drama/Thriller/
Comedy/Romance

SOMEWHERE in the psychedelic haze of pot fumes that shroud Inherent Vice, there is a groovy slice of California noir spluttering to be seen and heard.

Director Paul Thomas Anderson doesn't make it easy to fall in love

with his picture. Pacing is deliberately pedestrian and the running time is a test of mental and physical endurance.

His script, adapted from Thomas Pynchon's novel of the same name, demands constant attention.

Very little happens over the course of the 149 minutes but Anderson presents the narrative as a tangle of convoluted plots threads.

NAOMI Slade has always had a soft spot for snowdrops.

Growing up in west Wales where winters are cold and damp, she would gather a little posy of snowdrops for her mother on Valentine's Day, when little else was in flower.

Years later, the keen horticulturist and author has charted her love of these pint-sized beauties in *The Plant Lover's Guide To Snowdrops*, where she not only examines the many different varieties, but offers design ideas on where they can be shown off to their best.

"Very often people leave snowdrops to make the best of things unaided," she observes.

"If they are lucky, they get divided or fed, but the predominant regimen is one of benign neglect.

"A little care pays dividends, however, and to elevate the show from just delightful to simply fabulous, it is worth thinking about plants to accompany snowdrops as a background or counterpoint."

While snowdrops look amazing naturalised in a woodland area, if you have a medium-sized garden they look best with other plants, she says.

"In general, if a plant keeps itself to itself – think clumping ferns, small bulbs and specimen trees – it is probably a good neighbour as far as snowdrops are concerned," she observes.

Avoid placing snowdrops with dense evergreens with mats of roots, spreading plants such as comfrey and some of the more vigorous geraniums



SNOWDROPS: These classically elegant blooms mix well with other plants

A drop of magic in the garden

and herbaceous perennials that need dividing every few years such as heleniums and asters.

Instead, partner them with other small bulbs, she suggests.

"They look great with purple crocus tommasinianus and dwarf irises, or planted under a tree with bright gold aconites or cyclamen.

"A backdrop of foliage also shows

them off to good advantage, so position them among small evergreen ferns and around sedum spectabile cultivars and clumping, well-behaved geraniums.

(Avoid the thuggish spreading types as they may well swamp the bulbs.)

"Grasses are another pleasing companion and not necessarily the most

obvious choice – that particular award is held by hellebores, and not in a bad way, either."

Personally, I wouldn't particularly think of putting snowdrops in a container, but Naomi has other ideas, although they will need plenty of TLC if you put them in a pot, she warns.

"If you want to try growing them in a container, choose decent-sized

pots, repot every year to avoid depletion of nutrients and a general reduction in compost quality, and make sure that the pots don't freeze."

"Ultimately, the trick is to use your snowdrops well.

"Put them where you can see them, let them spread and multiply and they will repay you generously with your own personal winter spectacle."



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Valentine's Day Special

The finest ways to celebrate romance

We look at some of the hotspots the county has to offer loved-up couples this February 14...

THORLEY Taverns has a fabulous choice of five superb inns and hotels to make this year's Valentine's Night extra special.

In Broadstairs, the Captain Digby dates back to the late 1700s and won the prestigious Family Pub of the Year award at the National Pubcan Awards.

The Charles Dickens has stunning views of Viking Bay from its Copperfields restaurant and bar upstairs and it prides itself on its classic British ingredients many of which are locally sourced.

The Tartar Frigate shares its views of the bay and its Harbour restaurant is renowned as one of the best seafood restaurants in Kent. But if seafood isn't your thing, it includes mouthwatering traditional dishes from around the world.

If you want the romance to continue, why

not try the Oak Hotel in Ramsgate. It is sited in the only Royal Harbour in the country. You could stay the night next to the harbour in one of the hotel's stylish rooms and go for a walk along the beach after breakfast the next day.

Just along the coast is the Pegwell Bay Hotel with lovely views across the bay. Stay the night before a stroll on the Royal Esplanade next morning.

To book, call or visit: The Captain Digby, Broadstairs, 01843 867764 www.captaindigby.co.uk; The Charles Dickens, Broadstairs, 01843 603040 www.charlesdickensbroadstairs.co.uk; The Tartar Frigate, Broadstairs, 01843 862013 www.tartarfrigate.co.uk; The Oak Hotel, Ramsgate, 01843 581582 www.oakhotel.co.uk; The Pegwell Bay Hotel, Ramsgate, 01843 599590 www.pegwellbayhotel.co.uk.



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You can call us to find out about our next act. Mumbai Gate also caters for whatever party or function you are planning, with our experienced team, you know you will be in the safest of hands, so call us to let us know how we can help you bring your special event to life.

Don't miss out; book today to give your Valentine an evening to remember:

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The Royal Standard
Ashford Road
Bethersden
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WHAT will you be asking from your loved one this Valentine's Day? Chocolates? Flowers? A romantic dinner? Or the 'You. Are. Mine.' metal handcuffs? Courtesy of Fifty Shades of Grey the Official Pleasure Collection.

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Xanadu is an independent retailer with an online store (www.xanaduboutique.co.uk) and stores currently open in Ashford, Folkestone and Hastings, we offer our customers an ever changing selection of lingerie and adult novelties to supply everyone's personal taste and price range. Whether it's burlesque inspired or a classic lingerie set, it is our priority that you find exactly what you're looking for!

We are currently excited about our new store opening in Rochester in late February and our social media sites. Keep up to date with our products and promotions on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram (search Xanadu Boutique).

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TREAT Your Loved ones this Valentine's with a personalised hair care gift pack, purchase any two products and receive a free ribbon tied boutique gift bag and chocolates.

Incredible cuts, gorgeous colours, superb service and uncompromising standards of hairdressing, Jason Liddiard Hairdressing educates for quality and delivers excellence.

Since opening their first salon in 2001, their commitment to achieving the highest standards in hairdressing and client service has seen Jason Liddiard grow into a recognized brand by developing their own professional hair care range.

The business has focused on the needs of its clientele for more than 12 years, creating the best possible results, while understanding the requirements of the individual.

The salon offers a wide range of bespoke cuts, creative colours and luxury treatment services.

Each member of the Jason Liddiard team has been trained to listen carefully, offer advice and deliver results to their clients with their in-depth knowledge of skills. The team regularly update their training both in-house and via London's top academies. Lifestyle, face shape and personal style analysis is all taken into consideration before designing the perfect bespoke cut or colour.

Set in stylish surroundings, the salon has a welcoming atmosphere coupled with a commitment to give each client a total salon experience they'll visit time and time again for. Jason Liddiard reward clients with loyalty schemes, sales and other bonuses all tailor-made to enhance that personal touch.



Valentine's Day Special

ARE you ready for Romance?

You can enjoy a romantic three course meal with your loved one for just £29.95 per person at the Mercure Maidstone – including a sparkling glass of prosecco.

Or why not upgrade to the perfect overnight package for only £125.00 per couple?

This includes the meal above, prosecco and the chance to luxuriate in one of our romantic rooms.

On top of your room and a delicious breakfast, you will have the use of all our full leisure facilities.

Aching muscles and tired limbs can have a well-deserved soak in the heated indoor pool.

And you don't need to move a muscle in our Feel Good Health Club. You can just laze in the sauna, steam room or spa

bath, to reach a state of blissful nirvana.

Our accommodation package includes all the treats listed below and costs from £125 per couple.

- Bed & Breakfast for 1 night
- 3 course set meal for two
- A glass of prosecco each
- A small box of chocolates per couple
- Late check out

The hotel will also be offering a Valentine's Meal in the restaurant for guests who do not wish to stay at the hotel but wish to take advantage of our talented chefs and the quality ingredients we offer.

The menu is priced at just £29.95 per person. The package is available for stay dates from February 11 to the 22.

■ Mercure Maidstone, Great Danes Hotel, Ashford Road, Maidstone, or call us on 0844 8159045.



I DO Weddings invite you to their designer weekend where you can view the entire 2015 Ronald Joyce Collection and claim 10% off!

I Do Weddings are a small family-run business, established in 2009. They are committed to providing you with a friendly, helpful, personal service in their relaxed boutique at 116 Tankerton Road, Whitstable. Open Wednesday to Saturday 10am to 4pm, they can provide alternative hours by appointment. They stock an extensive range of stunning gowns by two fabulous bridal labels; D'zage and Ronald Joyce. They also have a wonderful range of bridesmaid dresses, evening and prom wear and a full men's suit hire service.

Founded in the 1950's, Ronald Joyce

is one of the best known designers in the industry. The beautiful dresses are created using modern materials and soft shapes; with a signature style of elegance, femininity and timelessness. The collections embrace a selection of tastes with dramatic detail, structured tailoring and exquisite embellishments.

The Ronald Joyce collection for spring 2015 is strikingly beautiful. Inspired by the glamour of the 1930's and 20's, it showcases an array of stylish and luxurious dresses. Taking inspiration from the catwalks, the statement low backs with illusion detail give this collection a super stylish look.

The weekend is on February 7 from 9am to 5pm, February 8 from 10am to 4pm. Call 01227 278501 for details.

ORIENTAL Buffet, the name speaks for itself.

We are a group of modern restaurants serving people a high standard of oriental dishes for a very reasonable price to suit people from all walks of life.

We are determined to serve you to the best possible way. Value for money and customer satisfaction is our motto.

You can enjoy a whole new dining experience at the Oriental Buffet Restaurants, filling your plate from a mouth-watering choice of over 60 different Chinese, Thai, Malaysian, Singaporean and Indian dishes that would grace the tables of any world class hotels that you would find in Singapore, Hong Kong or other big cities of South East Asia - and if you've still got room for more, help yourself to a delicious dessert. Want to

eat at home? You can take your meal away with you too.

Why bother to cook when you have such a vast range of Oriental cuisine to choose from, at such value-for-money prices?

Oriental Buffet, Folkestone, opened on May 6, 2001 on the High Street/ Rendezvous Street Junction in a magnificent Edwardian-style conservatory, designed to recreate the original style and elegance of Rendezvous Street.

So why not treat your loved one this Valentine's Day? We are offering a special Valentine's day menu with a free rose on each table.

■ Oriental Buffet, 18-20 Rendezvous Street, Folkestone, Kent CT20 1EY. Call 01303 227356 or email info@oriental-buffet.co.uk



LEAF Hotels is celebrating Valentine's on February 14 with special romantic dinners including a four-course candlelit dinner in Harbledown at Holiday Inn Express Canterbury for just £24.50 per person.

For £99 per couple you can enjoy the Valentine Dinner plus stay the night, awakening in the morning fresh to enjoy an Express Start Breakfast

With two hotels in Dover, Leaf hotels have a four-course candlelit dinner in the Olive Tree restaurant at the Ramada Dover for just £ 32.95 per person. Alternatively, the Best Western plus Dover Marina Hotel & Spa has a five-course dinner in the Waterfront restaurant for £39.95 per person. Like the Holiday Inn Express Canterbury, Valentine Breaks are available, which include the Valentine Dinner and Bed &

Breakfast accommodation from £149 per couple at the Ramada Dover and £169 per couple at the Best Western Plus Dover Marina Hotel & Spa.

All Leaf Hotels offer a free welcome drink to Valentine diners and while dining there will be some appropriate musical entertainment to suit the occasion.

Valentine's falls on a Saturday night this year, so it is essential to book early so as not to miss out on treating your loved one to a special evening out.

To book call: Holiday Inn Express Canterbury on 01227 86500 or email reservations@hiexpressctb.co.uk. Call the Ramada Dover on 01304 821230, or email reservations@ramadadover.co.uk. Call Best Western Plus Dover Marina Hotel & Spa on 01304 203633 or email reservations@dovermarinahotel.co.uk

your say...

Send us your views.
Write to: Kent House,
 81 Station Road, Ashford,
 TN23 1PP
Email:
 editorial@kosmedia.co.uk
Twitter:
 @kosmedia

Please include your name and address, although these will be withheld in exceptional circumstances, and a daytime phone number for verification (this will not be published). We reserve the right to edit all letters.

Behind the curve on legalisation

CONGRATULATIONS Kent on Sunday for having the courage to run a story on the controversial issue of drugs legalisation. This is a subject which more and more people are becoming interested in following the legalisation of cannabis production, sale and use in Uruguay and the American states of Washington and Colorado.

However, it's clear that Kent politicians are firmly behind the curve when it comes to having an evidence-based, grown up discussion about drugs policy. All 17 Kent MPs and the Kent Police Commissioner were invited to a screening of the new documentary film *The Culture High*, followed by a discussion about drugs law reform, at the University of Kent on 27 January. Not a single one showed up!

Here was a chance for Kent's politicians to see one of the most informative, thought provoking documentaries about cannabis legalisation produced in a long time and to participate in a lively debate afterwards. Yet despite this subject having profound implications for their constituents, our MPs and police commissioner turned their backs on this unique opportunity. Shame on our politicians for being so last century in their outlook!

The policing of drugs laws in Kent costs taxpayers millions every year. Hundreds of Kent residents have been criminalised and had their futures blighted through prosecution for a victimless crime. Yet despite these draconian laws thousands of people, of all ages and backgrounds, from across the county regularly use cannabis or other recreational drugs.

As the prospective parliamentary candidate for Thanet South I am not afraid to say that I have used and enjoyed recreational drugs and believe that the time is right for Parliament to have an evidence-based root and branch review of our old fashioned drugs laws. There is now overwhelming evidence based on real life experience to suggest that a more relaxed approach to drugs can work and is of benefit to both users and non-users alike.

Ian Driver
 Thanet Councillor and Parliamentary Candidate Thanet South

Park the lorries at Manston

RATHER than closing the M20, a substantial number of lorries (thousands) could be diverted down the A249, M2, A299 or even up the A256 from Dover to Manston Airport.

There are acres of concrete, a very wide runway, perimeter tracks, parking areas, etc... plus catering and toilet facilities available. What a ready made, short term solution -

LETTER OF THE WEEK



Op Stack should have been solved years ago

Many years ago when I was a senior manager at a business located in the true South East of England - that part of England that is certainly not affluent nor prosperous - I can confirm there were many discussions about the future locations of the distribution centres with a key consideration being Operation Stack.

It does simply not make sound business sense to locate any distribution centre, or any business that may wish to attract staff from out of the area, in a location where access can be significantly curtailed at the drop of a hat.

As a result, the business that I was part of left the area and there were job losses.

Over the coming years, when I had my own retail business, the problem and costs associated with disruptions to delivery services to my business resulted in significant impact to my being able to deliver a service to my own customers. We came to dread Operation Stack.

Operation Stack has blighted the true South East of England for more than 10 years. How many jobs have been lost and how many have not been created as a result of the uncertainty of access, we will never know.

Operation Stack should have been addressed many, many years ago.

Geoff March
 Via email

providing that the relatively minor problems of approach roads could be managed, thereby keeping all the M20 flowing.

Admittedly roads other than M20 would suffer from slower traffic, but traffic could be kept moving everywhere.

Not the complete answer, but it might help tremendously.

Brian Wibberley
 Broadstairs

Use technology to beat Op Stack

IN YOUR story on Operation Stack our MPs and the county council seem bent on applying last century solutions to a 21st century problem.

They are desperate to turn the garden of England into a series of lorry parks when far more intelligent solutions are at hand with advances in telecommunications and the internet!

Do none of them travel in up-to-date cars with internet connected sat navs, for instance? Already today we can avoid traffic jams with information transmitted

to touch screens in our cars, or to our hands-free phones which are all connected to the internet.

Therein lies the answer, a technological solution to an age old problem, simply use the world wide web to communicate up-to-date information to all travellers, especially haulage contractors and their drivers, and thus keep them from adding to the jams by preventing them leaving their yards in the first place.

Already vehicle operators know exactly where all their lorries are at any given time. None of them want to be stuck on the M20 in Kent and would only be too glad of a Eurotunnel app, text message, e-mail or web service that was informative about tunnel delays, etc... and prevented costly hours or days of unnecessary hold ups.

Let's assume that the more backward looking members of the county council haven't yet heard of cars that really can drive themselves, park themselves in multi-storey car parks, reverse into spaces with trailers attached and even avoid small children and dogs in complete darkness. And that technology is available today!

These councillors should look at

the overhead gantries on the M25 and listen to the dedicated radio station for the motorway, for these are useful pointers to an ever more connected world where it really is completely nonsensical to set out on a journey when the tunnel, or for that matter the ferries, are out of action for some reason.

Now just think where we will be in a few year's time when all these lorry parks are covering valuable agricultural land across the county because you can 'bet the ranch' they will all be redundant by the time all that concrete has set!

Probably best to ignore the positively prehistoric demand of MP for Dover and Deal, Charlie Elphicke: "I want to see a network of new lorry parks being built to take these trucks off the road."

Presumably, none of these lorry parks will be near his home or that of his constituents, or he will soon cease to be an MP when the next election takes place!

The same goes for county councillors who apparently 'are trying to get a lorry park off the ground'. Let's wish, for once, to preserve our beautiful county of Kent, they all remarkably unsuccessful.

Geoff Seymour
 Faversham

Don't criticise Pickles' letter

I READ your article "Pickles letter sends mixed message to our mosques" with interest.

I think it only natural, when there is so much trauma in the world of Islam, that we expect Imams to speak out against the atrocities that are happening in the name of Islam. Also to direct their congregation away from extremism.

One item of the article which interested me is where Dr Qurashi speaks of "mosques receiving funding" from local councils and national government". Surely, this is incorrect.

To my knowledge the ancient Christian churches in the UK do not receive such funding, many of which date back to Norman times and are expensive to keep in good repair.

A couple of years ago, I visited an ancient Christian church in Shropshire which was undergoing repair. They were asking for contributions to pay for the repairs from visitors and said that the current government had placed VAT on all repairs which had hitherto not been the case.

It is true that the vast majority of muslims in the UK have nothing to do with "terrorism" but sadly it is a fact that several hundred of the muslim faith have gone to fight the cause of factions such as ISIL.

It grieves me to read that many Christians and their places of worship in the middle east are being destroyed by "extremists". So, on reflection, I do not feel that Pickles' letter is an action to be placed under question.

Dorene McCormack
 Hythe



Dymchurch beach

by **Rebecca Burden**
from **St Albans**

If your picture is printed on this page you will receive an any-duration **Dover-Calais return crossing** for a car and up to five passengers, valid for a year, courtesy of...



To see your photograph printed, email editorial@kosmedia.co.uk, or post it to **Archant KOS Media, Images of Kent, Kent House, 81 Station Road, Ashford, TN23 1PP**. Be sure to include your name, address and a contact telephone number. Unfortunately we cannot return any prints, and please do not send negatives. Note: all digital images must be no less than 200dpi.






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Women Seeking

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.53 per minute plus network extras.

mydate24

JACQUELINE 79 widow, easy going, good listener, not slim or neurotic, OHAC, Sevenoaks, lonely would like gentleman's company. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 405533

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet-adult fun, any area, all calls answered. Tel No: 0905 002 1883 Box No: 413399

ATTRACTIVE female, 53, N/S, 5ft 8ins, looking for similar male, 50-55 who loves countryside, animals and is easygoing. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 405421

ADVENTUROUS sexy lady, 38yrs, married but seeks no strings fun with discreet man, any age. I'm tall, slim and dominant. Aca. Tel No: 0905 002 1937 Box No: 415301

AMANDA 44 blonde, blue eyed, very leggy, fun to be with, honest and caring seeking kind, considerate honest gent 74-79 plus. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 405315

ANNE, mid 40's, cheerful busy curvy affectionate real woman! Seeks gent, any age or looks for nights at mine. Tel No: 0905 002 1953 Box No: 410291

SUE 65, slim, animal lover, 5ft, blonde, likes socialising, meals out, theatre, countryside, happy go lucky, seeks male. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 405767

DISCREET lady, 42yrs wants to make you happy, come to me and let me do that for you. Aca. Tel No: 0905 002 1957 Box No: 409901

CAROLINE 60, 5ft 2ins, likes animals, walks, travel, gardening, seeks male. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 402067

ALISON 27, busty, shapely lady seeks fun only with broad minded man. Aca. Tel No: 0905 002 1961 Box 416073

LINDA young 62, smoker, seeking gent, 55-65 for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 400521

59YR old Kent lady, bubbly, large build, dog lover, easygoing, GSOH, seeks male. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 403071

JANET, 36yrs Scottish lady, too shy to go out but loves to chat from home. Will answer all texts. Text Only Mailbox Box No: 4627442

JAYNE 44 bored, underappreciated pretty blue eyed intelligent lady seeking fun and interesting professional in similar situation to me for discreet fun times. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 403011

MELANIE, sophisticated solvent brunette wtm working man of any age, in 32yrs. Text Only Mailbox Box No: 4627443

LISA blonde, blue eyes, looking for male, 42-54 for fun and romance. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 404877

LINDY, new to area, hoping to meet kind many of any age, looks unimportant. In 43yrs blonde and petite. Text Only Mailbox Box No: 4627444

LADY 57, away with the fairies, looking for her wizard and enchantment. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 403093

PAMELA, married to boring man! Text only for fun phone frolics. Text Only Mailbox Box No: 4624149

LIZ blonde blue eyed curvy female, considered attractive, tactile, sensual, enjoys music, entertaining, nice people, seeking well educated professional 50-60yrs. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 402773

JULIA, seeks fifty shades of grey! You should be strong minded and seeking fun. Text Only Mailbox Box No: 4627445

JO 29 tall slim female who loves soaps, animals, shopping, being a mum and am looking for 40's male with GSOH who will appreciate a tactile, loving female. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 402765

SUSIE bubbly blonde looking for fun. Age/looks unimportant but must have a sense of adventure. Can travel and accommodate. Text Only Mailbox Box No: 4624145

52YR old female, single mum of 2, seeking honest, caring, decent man. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 398991

PHILLIPA 22yrs just left boarding school, hoping to meet experienced working class man for real life fun. Text Only Mailbox Box No: 4624147

SLIM N/S female, 54, working, reliable, easy going, likes nature, animals, seeks nice male companion. 60-64 for country/seaside walks and meals out. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 405745

SLIM brunette 36yrs hoping to meet older gent for friendship, fun, maybe more. Text Only Mailbox Box No: 4624146

NICKY 45, 5ft 2ins, blue eyes, blonde hair, looking for genuine male for friendship. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 389774

PAMMY 42yrs, recently divorced and fancies becoming a "cougar". Text Only Mailbox Box No: 4624148

LISA 44, blonde hair, blue eyes, 5ft 6ins, nice personality, trustworthy, kind, likes cinema, nights in, walks, music, seeks male for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 404751

CLAIRE looking for adventurous male to live life to the max and enjoy adult fun times with. Go on give me a call. Any age. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 402993

SLIM tall, elegant, feminine, N/S, solvent lady, young 50's, likes travel, red wine, seeks tall, sincere, Military/professional gent of high calibre. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 405707

GILL 41, shy, lonely single country loving female with no ties, OHAC WLM n/s genuine, confident male companion for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 402799

AMANDA 36yr old single female, blue eyes, curvy, really pretty with lovely smile, loves music, nights out, WLM loving male for dates and hopeful ltr. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 402787

DOG lover short of British slim petite lady to maybe get into 1-2-1 relationship and start something new. Smoker welcome, age immaterial. Tunbridge Wells area. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 404417

COUNTRY loving outgoing female, blue eyes, 5ft 2ins, genuine, caring, intelligent, seeks honourable, smart, professional male, 68-75 to share laughter and companionship. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 392899

SINGLE mum, new to Canterbury, 37, attractive, blonde, seeking soul mate, preferably with car. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 397751

60YR old black female, sociable, seeks romantic, articulate white male for friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 402523

REBECCA kind, caring, honest, lonely, seeking older gent to wine and dine me. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 402273

DIVORCED female, 66, blue eyes, 5ft 4ins, medium build, blonde hair, seeks male, 65-75 for friendship/companionship, maybe more. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 403275

21YR old slim figured female, no ties, looking for male 30-45yrs for non committed relationship, discretion assured. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 402761

CHRIS petite attractive brunette, enjoys social drinks, meals out, theatre, seeks hardworking professional male looking for adult attention too. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 402759

5FT female, brown hair, 39, single mum, seeks caring, dedicated guy. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 397915

SHIRLEY 32 attractive nurse, enjoys good food/wine, keeping fit, looking good, searching for non committed relations with mature well-dressed man. Any age/looks/status. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 402779

Men Seeking

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.53 per minute plus network extras.

mydate24

DEREK Croydon area, 52, self employed, seeks female for 1-2-1 relationship, likes meals out, places of interest, holidays. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 406559

MATTHEW, 43 widower, business manager, solvent, reasonable looks but lonely. Text Only Mailbox Box No: 4624150

OUTGOING professional, fun loving, entertaining male, seeking warm, sincere, fun loving female for LTR. Animals/children welcome. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 405633

70YRS young male, good looking, GSOH, seeking lady for love and affection. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 403455

RONALD 65 plus, 5ft 9ins, slim, sociable, GSOH, tactile, N/S, many interests, seeking lady dance partner to learn ballroom and Latin. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 403211

STEVE 64, active, likes fishing, swimming, karaoke, honest, genuine, seeks female. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 405717

CANTERBURY sign language interpreter 58, 5ft 10ins, medium build, GSOH, varied interests, seeks slim-medium build female, 21-42 for LTR. Single mum welcome. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 405697

TALL friendly, light hearted, single, 58, seeks pretty woman for LTR with mutual selection of activities and choosing how to spend our time. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 405557

MALE 48, 5ft 10ins, medium build, likes gardening, cinema, reading, WLM lady. Thanet area. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 404295

LYN happy, young looking 72yr old, seeking interesting man, 65 plus to enjoy life with. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 403101

GEORGINA widow, WLM gent, 60-80 with GSOH for days out, friendship, companionship, maybe more. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 393067

ANNA very lonely divorced single mum with lots of love to give seeks similar caring male who also wants to find the right person, any age/looks. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 403481

LISA 39yr old tall slim blonde with GSOH and a wicked sense of humour, employed, OHAC, looking for similar male who enjoys life as much as I do. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 403391

47YR old female, fun loving, green eyes, likes most things, seeks N/S male, 47-52 with GSOH for nights out, friendship, maybe more. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 401287

RETIRE male 68, 5ft 8ins, considerate, GSOH, easy-going, likes driving, shopping, most music, seeking lady 60-70 for friendship. Ashford. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 404589

VIC mid 60's medium build male, active, N/S, likes countryside, DIV, seeks compatible female. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 405085

CHRIS from Folkestone, 68yrs young widower, N/S, 5ft 9ins, OHAC, likes country music, rock n' roll, WLM N/S female with similar interests. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 405079

CHRIS 68, 5ft 9ins, 13st, frustrated widower, likes country/western music, real ale, gardening, cruises, looking for companionship. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 402271

40 something Gemini 5ft 10ins, slim, GSOH, varied outdoor interests, seeks similar outgoing female, 30-45 for dates and LTR. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 404535

TED 63, 5ft 7ins, average build, seeks female 55-75 for friendship, possible LTR. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 401913

PROFESSIONAL male, early 40's, OHAC, independent, seeks warm, sincere, fun loving female for LTR. Children/animals welcome. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 404537

THANET male, young mid 60's, caring, 5ft 5ins, dark hair, likes travel, countryside, seeks slim, attractive local soul mate. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 403729

MICHAEL slim, 44, likes CD, films, seeks older male 55 plus for fun times in the Thanet area. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 404373

DENNIS 53yrs retired police officer living in Kent, WLM female for mutual fun times. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 404201

PAUL 49, 5ft 8ins likes eating/nights in/out seeks loving female for ltr. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 404013



35 YR old male, 6ft, dark hair, easy going, likes music, films, reading, walks, looking for female for LTR. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 405941

ACTIVE 60's semi-retired man, OHAC, GSOH, enjoys theatre, dancing, singing, amateur dramatics, coast, gardening etc., WLM n/s female with similar interests. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 404671

FIT fellow, full of fun, 58, seeks to find fanciable lady for free and fascinating future for LTR. Find your jar half full. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 405857

DAVE 45, 6ft, large build, ginger hair, green eyes, caring, OHAC, likes laugh, cinema, pubs, restaurants, walks, shopping, music, dvds, gardening, animals, seeks female of similar age. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 404541

KEVIN 49, single dad, employed, good cook/laugh, seeks female for fun and good times. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 402405

WINK 2 Adverts box no 80098

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DENNIS 53yrs retired police officer living in Kent, WLM female for mutual fun times. Tel No: 0905 002 1106 Box No: 404201

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SHAKE ON IT: The government's Michael Gove and South East Local Economic Partnership's Peter Jones

Government cash set to help county grow

by Jamie Weir
jamie.weir@archant.co.uk

THOUSANDS of jobs are set to be created, after the government awarded the South East Local Economic Partnership (Selep) over £46 million in funding from its Growth Deal fund.

The pot of cash - which takes the government's total given to the Selep to £488.3m - is set to create more than 5,850 new jobs, while unlocking land for new homes and helping to tackle infrastructure problems.

Dover will see a chunk of the cash, with developments such as improved highway connections and a long-planned regeneration

of the waterfront.

Selep says that this will lead to 500 new jobs, and 100 new homes.

Operation Stack could also be a thing of the past, with £3 million being pumped in to tackle the problem of HGVs clogging up Kent's roads.

Lorry parking capacity is likely to be high on the shopping list for county chiefs, with a raft of MPs in the east of the county demanding action is taken to alleviate Kent from congestion due to freight.

Selep says that the spend on a lorry park could also help open up new land for housing, while creating 300 new jobs.

Creating jobs at Ashford is also on the agenda, with £2 million

being pumped into its train station signalling to secure international services, and create up to 2,000 new jobs.

Selep chairman Peter Jones said: "This Growth Deal is a huge boost for the south east economy - through our deal with government almost half a billion pounds is now to be invested in local growth, supporting projects of national significance and of real importance to local areas, bringing new jobs, businesses and homes.

"This funding builds on the earlier investment announced for transport infrastructure, reaches right across the south east from the Thames Gateway to our coastal towns and attracts new private sector support."

Not just any store set to bring 57 jobs

ALMOST 60 new jobs are set to be created in Aylesford when upmarket retailer, Marks and Spencer, opens a new food hall on March 18.



The retail giant announced that the new 9,100 sq ft store would sell almost 5,000 food lines, and also include a cafe and specialist bakery for shoppers.

It will be located on the South Aylesford Retail Park.

Pub takes gold in foodie awards

THE Sportsman pub in Seasalter has been named the top of its class in the UK.

The Budweiser Budvar Top 50 Gastropub Awards 2015 were hosted by TV chef, Tom Kerridge, who revealed the eatery as its winner, beating competition from across the country.

The awards are decided by top industry experts such as food writers, pub guide editors and chefs.

Tesco cuts fat in New Year diet

TESCO announced this week that it would close its 'unprofitable' Chatham superstore.

The closure will come as a blow to workers, with the loss of 121 jobs when the shop shuts for the final time. The superstore giant made the announcement just weeks after it withdrew plans for a new shop in Dartford.

Its CEO, Dave Lewis, said that the store - along with 42 others across the UK - needed to close to protect the wider business.

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■ The Pegwell Bay Hotel, Ramsgate, 01843 599590, visit www.pegwellbayhotel.co.uk

Planning changes make small plot sites profitable

j **eh** **w** **i**
jamie.weir@archant.co.uk

HOUSE builders will be celebrating, after planning rules were changed to make small scale developments easier, exempting sites with fewer than 10 houses from certain conditions.

Under the new rules, developers are no longer required to provide a proportion of affordable housing in developments, or make contributions - known as Section 106 - whenever they build.

Rural property and surveying company, Smith Gore, says that the new rules should boost the building industry, while helping keep housing affordable.

Lee Scott, head of planning in the south east, said: "With demand for housing across the south east continuing to outstrip supply, any move which can help builders and landowners bring smaller sites forward must be supported."

"While there is a clear and pressing need for affordable housing too - making small sites unviable was not the way to deliver it. Thirty per cent of zero is zero."

The government estimates that the policy will save developers an average of £15,000 per dwelling in Section 106 housing contributions.

These changes could be helpful in delivering



DEVELOPMENT: Planning rules will enable small scale rural developments

a number of smaller developments in rural areas, which, under the previous rules were not considered profitable.

Michael Wooldridge, partner at the company said: "This could have major implications for Kent. These exemptions could make it possible for village housing schemes to be delivered without the burden of costly and unnecessary contributions."

"The added bonus is that this could also encourage smaller sub-regional house-builders, of which there are many in Kent, back into the market."

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by Rail • 9 April, 14 & 21 October, 2015

10 days, £1299pp • Quote: PG4/10-KOS

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Champagne
Check-in

Bavaria & The Sound of Music Country

by Rail - afternoon departure - 6 May, 2015

7 days, £879pp • Quote: MU5-KOS

Bavaria is one of Germany's most picturesque and fascinating regions with an abundance of natural treasures and a richness of history. From our hotel by Lake Chiemsee in Bavaria, we visit: Munich; 'Mad' King Ludwig's famous castle Neuschwanstein - inspiration for Disney's Sleeping Beauty Castle and his Royal Palace of Herrenchiemsee - a Palace of Versailles replica on an island in Lake Chiemsee; and Oberammergau. We also cross the border into Austria to visit its lake district and Salzburg - settings for The Sound of Music movie.

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Champagne
Check-in

Monaco Supercars, Paris & the Côte d'Azur

by Rail - afternoon departure - 17 April, 2015

6 days, £799pp • Quote: SM4-KOS

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Braemar Gathering & Highland Steam

by Rail • 3 September, 2015

6 days half board, £689pp • Quote: GB9-KOS

Since 1848 the world-famous Braemar Gathering has been regularly attended by the reigning Monarch (as the Chieftain of the gathering) and members of the Royal Family. We will visit the gathering and tour the Trossachs - gateway to the Highlands; cruise on Loch Katrine and ride the Strathspey Steam Railway through gorgeous Highland scenery.

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Note: Attendance by the Queen and Prince Charles not guaranteed



Champagne
Check-in

Zundert Flower Parade & Antwerp

by Rail - afternoon departure - 4 September, 2015

4 days, £389pp • Quote: ZD9-KOS

Come with us on a charming break taking in the spectacular Zundert Flower Parade and Antwerp. The parade is made up of breathtaking displays entirely created by volunteers using dahlias - the largest of its kind in the world. Many of them are animated, giving a truly realistic appearance. The town is also renowned as the birth place of Vincent Van Gogh. Antwerp, Belgium's second biggest city, is our base for this break and is a true architectural wonder.

INCLUDED: Escorted throughout • Champagne Check-in at St Pancras • Return rail travel from London St Pancras (from Ebbsfleet on request) to Antwerp • 3 nights 3 star hotel B&B in Antwerp • Excursion to Zundert Flower Parade • Transfers from station to hotel on arrival and departure

By Steve Loader
editorial@kosmedia.co.uk

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LATEST ARRIVALS: sporty 308 GT models (below) have just been added to the 308 range, while Peugeot's 108 city car star (main picture) was part of the big news last year, when the 2008 (inset) was also a favourite with buyers

Peugeot is back and is roaring loud and proud

THIS time last year, Peugeot was building up to launch its all-new 308 family hatchback – a potential game changer for the brand after falling behind in this key sector.

The 308 went on to win the coveted European Car of the Year award and a host of other gongs, while underlining Peugeot's declared intent to move upmarket and increase sales volumes.

It was followed soon after by the elegant yet capacious 308 SW or estate version which, we noticed, announced its premium intentions with a smartly carpeted load area rather than the taton-a-roll normally seen in estate cars at this level – the type of fibrous matter that attracts dog hairs, wood chippings and other undesirables with a grip akin to superglue.

And now, the French lion brand has a performance flagship, the new 308 GT model intended to be a strong seller in its own right as well as a halo model for the rest of the 308 range – though don't rule out an ultimate sporting GTi version sometime later.

The new GT is available both as a hatchback or SW and has distinct styling differences inside and out, as well as a lowered ride height, though complemented by big 18-inch wheels.

The 308's launch companion of the previous



year, the compact 108 city car, has a rather different stance, but does at least echo the upmarket message of its bigger sister.

As with its 107 predecessor, the smallest member of the Peugeot range is a spin-off from a joint project with Citroen and Toyota, but the

108 is the most posh of the three clones and looks particularly smart when fitted with a contrasting colour roll-top electric roof, fitting nicely into the Peugeot range below the excellent 208 supermini and 2008 junior crossover – two top sellers for the brand.

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11 61	PEUGEOT 207 ACCESS 1.6HDI 5DR, 50,645 Miles	£5,801
12 12	PEUGEOT PARTNER TEEPEE 1.6HDI T, 14,315 Miles	£8,737
11 61	RENAULT CLIO LINE TOM TOM 1.6 GT, 13,057 Miles	£6,378
11 11	RENAULT GRAND SCENIC 1.5dCi, 17,167 Miles	£9,060
11 61	RENAULT GRAND SCENIC EXPRESSON 1.6, 6,712 Miles	£7,864
11 61	RENAULT KANGOO EXPRESSON 1.6, 5,552 Miles	£6,786
11 61	SEAT LEON ECOMOTIVE 1.6TDI S C, 18,410 Miles	£9,084
11 61	SKODA FABIA 1.2 S DSG 5DR, 10,360 Miles	£7,378
10 60	SUZUKI SWIFT 1.3 SZ3, 12,785 Miles	£6,306



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11 61	VAUXHALL AGILA 1.2 SE 5DR, 16,240 Miles	£5,871
11 61	VAUXHALL ASTRA EXCLUSIVE 1.4i VVT, 15,088 Miles	£7,851
14 14	VAUXHALL ASTRA 1.4i VVT SRI 5DR, 16,689 Miles	£9,817
13 13	VAUXHALL ASTRA ENERGY 1.6i VVT, 4,225 Miles	£9,419
11 61	VAUXHALL ASTRA 1.6i VVT SE 5DR, 22,242 Miles	£8,043
11 61	VAUXHALL ASTRA 1.6i VVT SE 5DR, 5,685 Miles	£8,620
11 63	VAUXHALL ASTRA 1.6i VVT SE 5DR, 12,582 Miles	£9,889
14 14	VAUXHALL ASTRA 1.6i VVT SE 5DR, 12,234 Miles	£10,171
11 61	VAUXHALL ASTRA 2.0CDTI SRI 5DR, 9,993 Miles	£8,599
12 62	VAUXHALL ASTRA GTC 1.4i SPORT, 17,410 Miles	£9,786
12 62	VAUXHALL ASTRA GTC 1.4i SPORT, 14,447 Miles	£9,909
13 13	VAUXHALL ASTRA GTC 1.4i SPORT, 8,700 Miles	£10,032
13 13	VAUXHALL ASTRA GTC 1.6i SRI 3DR, 11,808 Miles	£11,381
12 62	VAUXHALL CORSA ACTIVE 1.2i 5DR, 8198 Miles	£6,706
13 13	VAUXHALL CORSA ENERGY 1.2i 3DR, 8,596 Miles	£6,689
14 14	VAUXHALL CORSA 1.4i (a/c) SRI, 12,079 Miles	£8,510
14 14	VAUXHALL CORSA 1.4i (a/c) SRI, 9,703 Miles	£8,603
14 14	VAUXHALL CORSA 1.4i (a/c) SRI, 9,452 Miles	£8,611
14 14	VAUXHALL CORSA 1.4i (a/c) SRI, 9,019 Miles	£8,626
14 14	VAUXHALL CORSA 1.4i (a/c) SRI, 8,648 Miles	£8,641
14 14	VAUXHALL CORSA 1.4i SE 5DR, 12,000 Miles	£8,141
14 14	VAUXHALL CORSA 1.4i SE 5DR, 9,829 Miles	£8,243
14 14	VAUXHALL CORSA 1.4i SXi 5DR, 8,525 Miles	£7,519
14 14	VAUXHALL CORSA 1.4i SXi 5DR, 8,144 Miles	£7,533
11 61	VAUXHALL INSIGNIA 1.8i VVT SRI, 24,928 Miles	£8,780
13 13	VAUXHALL INSIGNIA 2.0CDTI SE 5, 21,060 Miles	£10,667
12 62	VAUXHALL INSIGNIA 2.0CDTI SRI, 12,377 Miles	£11,875
14 14	VAUXHALL INSIGNIA TECH 2.0CDTI, 6,664 Miles	£16,920
12 62	VAUXHALL MERIVA 1.3CDTI (a/c), 20,451 Miles	£10,028
11 61	VAUXHALL MERIVA EXCLUSIV 1.4i, 5,250 Miles	£7,271
12 62	VAUXHALL ZAFIRA DESIGN 1.6i VVT, 18,434 Miles	£8,965
11 61	VAUXHALL ZAFIRA ELITE 1.7CDTI, 29,322 Miles	£8,456
11 61	VAUXHALL ZAFIRA EXCLUSIV 1.7CDTI, 24,655 Miles	£7,692
11 11	VAUXHALL ZAFIRA EXCLUSIV 1.7CDTI, 5,473 Miles	£8,190
11 61	VAUXHALL ZAFIRA ELITE 1.7TD 5DR, 20,928 Miles	£8,594
11 11	VAUXHALL ZAFIRA 1.8i SRI 5DR, 47,853 Miles	£6,212
14 14	VAUXHALL ZAFIRA 2.0CDTI SRI 5DR, 5,504 Miles	£14,399
11 61	VOLVO S40 2.0 SE 4DR, 10,356 Miles	£9,236
11 61	VOLVO S40 2.0 SE Lux 4DR, 45,237 Miles	£8,392

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Hyundai has the power to transform

Korean maker has catapulted to the top of global carmaking in just a few years – with cars like the ix35, writes **Steve Loader**...

SOME manufacturers have taken a century or many decades to reach the top – one decade has transformed Hyundai.

And it's not the Korean brand's value, high standard specifications or famous five-year/unlimited mileage warranty that have made the difference – major factors though they are – but a visible upsurge in what really matters: style, engineering and quality.

A case in point is the smart ix35 SUV; the first Hyundai to wear the brand's 'ix' versatility branding, it persuaded car buyers to look beyond the bonnet badge and assess the car on merit to find something not obvious with Hyundai before: it was nicer to be in, drive and own than its predecessor.

As a result, at launch in 2010, Hyundai dealers soon found they couldn't get enough cars to satisfy demand. A further sign that Hyundai got it right first time came with a midlife facelift when, understandably, the brand adopted a 'don't fix it if it ain't broke' policy.

Having looked at customer and media feedback, the brand simply tweaked the chassis and suspension



TO THE NEXT TEN YEARS : Hyundai's ix35 has been a huge hit with drivers wanting quality and style

set-up to boost ride comfort and handling, and updated emissions and economy on the powertrains.

Pricing has also remained competitive: it still looks like a lot of car for prices starting at just £17k, though most buyers realise that the best bargains are higher up the range, where you get lots of

luxury kit as standard.

For instance, take our 134bhp 2.0-litre diesel test car with four-wheel drive and auto gearbox – a more economical option (41.5mpg official combined cycle) introduced at facelift time.

This sells at £27,215 in near-flagship Premium trim, a deal that

includes 18-inch alloys, heated front and rear outer seats, rain-sensing windscreen wipers, electric folding/heated door mirrors, self-levelling bi-xenon headlamps, keyless entry, seven-inch infotainment touchscreen with reversing camera, leather seats, cruise control and tyre pressure monitoring – and much more.

Hyundai ix35 Premium 2.0 CRDi 4WD Auto

Price:	from £27,215
Driving appeal:	★★★★
Image:	★★★★
Space:	★★★★
Value:	★★★★
Running costs:	★★★★
How green?:	★★★★
Best rival:	Nissan Qashqai

And this premium look goes with a premium air about the car, with its high levels of cabin trim, comfort, ride quality and refinement – you certainly won't know there's a diesel under the bonnet.

The driving position is excellent and easily adjusted and those in the back have lots of space and legroom, while the 591-litre boot is at least 160 litres bigger than key rivals, yet the ix35 is not huge on the outside.

Despite its pseudo off-roader ride height, the ix35 is also pretty handy too; there is very little body roll from the taut, well-mannered suspension and if the steering lacks feedback, it pay dividends when parking.

All in all, if it was not for the badge on the bonnet, you would swear you were driving a premium make – give ambitious Hyundai another decade though...

ALL-NEW MAZDA2 PREVIEW EVENT AT INVICTA MAZDA MAIDSTONE

We are delighted to invite you to an exclusive
preview event at Invicta Mazda Maidstone
Wednesday 4 February from 16:00

This exclusive preview event is your one and only chance to catch a glimpse of all-new Mazda2 before its official launch later in 2015. At this select gathering of invited guests, our product specialist will introduce you to the car before inviting you to explore this captivating new model at your leisure.

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Representative

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Get ready for happy

Spring hasn't yet sprung, but don't let that stop you from putting a spring in your step. The ix35's spacious interior, impressive technology and great offer should do the trick.

Personal Contract Purchase. 25 month term. 10,000 miles p.a. Minimum 30% deposit required.

Motorline Hyundai – Canterbury 01227 817555 Units 2b & 2c, Westminster Road, Canterbury CT1 1YY

Motorline Hyundai – Maidstone 01622 624070 Bircholt Road, Parkwood, Maidstone ME15 9YN



Fuel consumption in MPG (l/100km) for ix35 range: Urban 32.5 (8.7) – 44.8 (6.3), Extra Urban 47.1 (6.0) – 60.1 (4.7), Combined 40.4 (7.0) – 53.3 (5.3), CO₂ Emissions 183 – 139 g/km. These official EU test figures are to be used as a guide for comparative purposes and may not reflect all driving results.

You will not own the vehicle until all payments are made. We are a credit broker (not a lender). We can introduce you to a limited number of carefully selected finance providers. We may receive a commission from them for the introduction. 0% Personal Contract Purchase available on Hyundai ix35 between 1st January and 31st March 2015 inclusive over 25 month term. At the end of the agreement there are 3 options: (i) Renew: Part exchange the vehicle, (ii) Retain: Pay the Optional Final Payment to own the vehicle or (iii) Return the vehicle. Further charges may be made subject to mileage and condition of the vehicle. Excess mileage charge 14.9p per mile. Finance subject to status. T&Cs apply. Applicants must be 18 or over. Guarantee/Indemnity may be required. Hyundai Motor Finance RH1 1SR. Model shown: ix35 Premium 1.7 CRDi 2WD at £23,410 OTR including Sleek Silver metallic paint at £560. Offer not available for customers under the Hyundai Affinity Programme. 5 Year Unlimited Mileage Warranty terms and exclusions apply. Visit www.hyundai.co.uk/owning or ask your local Dealer.



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Official Fuel Consumption in MPG (l/100km) and CO₂ emissions (g/km) for the 108 range are: Urban 52.3 – 62.8 (5.4 – 4.5), Extra Urban 74.3 – 83.1 (3.8 – 3.4), Combined 65.7 – 74.3 (4.3 – 3.8) and CO₂ 99 – 88 (g/km). MPG figures are achieved under official EU test conditions, intended as a guide for comparative purposes only, and may not reflect actual on-the-road driving conditions. #Terms and conditions apply, participating dealers only or visit www.peugeot.co.uk. *The first year Road Fund Licence (RFL) is included in the on the road price. The Dealer will provide customers with a cheque equivalent to twice the current RFL cost. The customer must apply for years 2 and 3 RFL. Just Add Fuel (JAF) is subject to status. *Minimum age 21, 25 or 30 on selected models, maximum age 75. Policyholder must have a minimum of 2 years NCD to use on the vehicle. All drivers must meet eligibility criteria including minimum 2 years' full UK licence, driving convictions/claims limits. Excesses apply. 3 years motor insurance is provided and underwritten by U K Insurance Limited, which is authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority. A guarantee may be required. Written quotations available from Peugeot Financial Services, Quadrant House, Princess Way, Redhill RH1 1QA. Motorline Canterbury is acting as a credit broker and is not a lender. JAF is incorporated into a Personal Lease contract. 108 Active 3dr 1.0 68, customer initial rental £1500, 35 monthly rentals payable, optional final rental £4532. If you choose to pay the optional final rental, you can pay on annual rental equivalent to one of your monthly rentals but will not own the car. Ownership is possible with JAF Passport, ask us for details. Rentals quoted for a typical customer and will vary according to age, postcode, initial rental and annual mileage. Excess mileage charges may apply. Routine servicing included only. Excludes wear parts. This offer is not available in Northern Ireland. Offer available on cars ordered by 31/03/15. Calls may be recorded for training purposes. Information correct at time of going to press.



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Fuel consumption in MPG (l/100km) for New Generation i20 range: Urban 30.7 (9.2) – 80.7 (3.5), Extra Urban 53.3 (5.3) – 94.2 (3.0), Combined 42.2 (6.7) – 88.3 (3.2), CO₂ Emissions 155–84g/km. Fuel consumption: figures shown are based on official EU test figures. These are to be used as a guide for comparative purposes and may not reflect all driving results.

YOU WILL NOT OWN THE VEHICLE UNTIL ALL PAYMENTS ARE MADE. WE ARE A CREDIT BROKER (NOT A LENDER). WE CAN INTRODUCE YOU TO A LIMITED NUMBER OF CAREFULLY SELECTED FINANCE PROVIDERS. WE MAY RECEIVE A COMMISSION FROM THEM FOR THE INTRODUCTION. 5.9% APR Representative available on Personal Contract Purchase over 25, 31 and 37 month term or Conditional Sale over 12, 24 or 36 month term. Ts & Cs apply. Finance subject to status. Available between 22nd January and 31st March 2015, inclusive. Applicants must be 18 or over. Guarantee / Indemnity may be required. Hyundai Motor Finance RH1 1SR. Model shown: New Generation i20 Premium SE at £14,725 with metallic paint at £495 extra.

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Swale Academies Trust



Westlands School

Westlands Avenue, Sittingbourne, Kent ME10 1PF

Teaching Assistant

Required for immediate start

Salary £13,512 - £16,468 (pro rata)

(equal to £8,155 to £9,940 pa depending on experience)

27.08 hours per week, worked over 5 days, term time only.

A post has become available for a permanent role of 27 hours per week as a Teaching Assistant, to support pupils, who have a range of learning needs, both in our intervention unit and in mainstream classes. Experience in early-years reading skills, literacy and phonics would be an advantage.

Applicants should have the necessary skills to support in mainstream classes, in small groups or on an individual basis. Candidates would be expected to have good literacy and numeracy skills, and as part of the interview, may be asked to demonstrate their skills in supporting pupils.

Recruitment packs are available from Westlands School or online (www.westlands.org.uk). Please note that we cannot accept CVs without an application form. Applicants should include a letter of application detailing how they meet the requirements of the person specification

Closing date: Wednesday 4 Feb 2015 at noon.

SSwale Academies Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This post is subject to an enhanced DBS check.

Contact Details

Tel: 01795 477475 Fax: 01795 479461

Email swa@westlands.kent.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mr S Cox MA

Trust Principal: Mr J Whitcombe MA



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For further details please contact Sally Brooks on 01795 886220



Spencer Private Hospitals are two hospitals situated in East Kent. The larger of the two hospitals is a 22 bed independent hospital situated at the QEOM Hospital in Margate, whilst the second hospital is a 4 bed independent hospital based at the William Harvey Hospital in Ashford. Both hospitals have a reputation for providing excellent medical and surgical facilities supported by Specialist Consultants, Specialist Nurses and Physiotherapists. We have state of the art diagnostic equipment and exceptionally high standards of nursing care.

The continuing growth of our business has resulted in vacancies for the following staff:

Staff Nurse - Ward - Ashford:

Part time Hours: 30 per week Closing date: 13/2/2015

Salary: £23k-25k (pro rata), dependent on qualifications and experience

Qualifications and Experience

• Registered Nurse 1st level

- Evidence of continual professional development
- Experience in a surgical/medical environment with a knowledge and understanding of surgical/medical procedures
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills

To discuss this opportunity, or to arrange an informal visit, please contact: Liz Justice, Ward Manager on 01233 616256

Staff Nurse - Ward - Margate:

Full time Hours: 37.5 per week Closing date: 13/2/2015

Salary: Dependent on qualifications and experience

Qualifications and Experience

• Registered Nurse 1st level

- Evidence of continual professional development
- Experience in a surgical/medical environment with a knowledge and understanding of surgical/medical procedures
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills

To discuss this opportunity, or to arrange an informal visit, please contact: Mary Guarnieri, Ward Manager on 01843 234249

For a job description and application form please visit www.spencerprivatehospitals.com/careers

Alternatively, please contact Justine Whittle, HR Assistant
Telephone: 01304 245943

E-mail: recruitment@spencerhospitals.com

Spencer Private Hospitals is an equal opportunity employer. This position is subject to a Disclosure and Barring check.



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Pro rata to £11,456.60 - £12,987.36

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Do you want to join one of the top performing Secondary Modern Schools in Kent?

We are seeking to appoint a passionate member of support staff who will join a team of Welfare Assistants to work closely with and support the needs of physically disabled (PD) students.

The post holder will be required to support PD students both in the classroom and within the PD area with their learning and welfare needs in order to maximise their levels of achievement and independence. Experience of dealing with students' welfare therefore is essential and the post holder will be required to undertake moving and handling training.

The School received a very positive Ofsted Report recently and was rated 'good' in every category. Thamesview is a new school build that benefits from innovative learning environments and state of the art ICT equipment.

We are committed to providing high quality learning experiences for our students and to supporting our staff through excellent CPD opportunities.

Further details and an application form can be obtained from our HR Manager on email k.mcgowan@thamesview.kent.sch.uk or the school's website.

Closing Date: 3rd February 2015, 9.00am

Interviews: Week Commencing 9th February 2015

CVs without an application form will not be accepted.

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students.

Appointment to this post will require an Enhanced Disclosure via the Disclosure and Barring Service.



Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

David Armstrong trading as Armstrong Haulage of 11 Medway Road, Crayford, Dartford, Kent DA1 4PN is applying to add an operating centre to keep 4 goods vehicles and 5 trailers at Burgess Business Park, Crabtree Manor Way South, Kent, DA17 6 AD Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds, LS9 6NF, stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's Office.

Notice under Article 11 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010

Proposed development at Land rear of 27 High Street, Cranbrook, Kent TN17 3EE

Take notice that an application is being made to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council by Mr Freeman for the construction of a single dwelling.

Any owner of the land or tenant who wishes to make representations about this application should write to the Council at:

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Mid Kent Planning Support
Maidstone House
King Street
Maidstone
Kent ME15 6JQ

Within 21 days of the date of this notice.

Signed: Lambert & Foster

Date: 31st January 2015

Statement of owners' rights: The grant of planning permission does not affect owners' rights to retain or dispose of their property, unless there is some provision to the contrary in an agreement or lease.

Statement of agricultural tenants' rights: The grant of planning permission for non-agricultural development may affect agricultural tenants' security of tenure.

'Owner' means a person having a freehold interest or a leasehold interest the unexpired term of which is not less than seven years. 'Tenant' means a tenant of an agricultural holding any part of which is comprised in the land.



THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE) (ENGLAND) ORDER 2010

The following applications have been submitted for consideration by the Council:

Y15/0041/SH - 116 Sandgate High Street Sandgate Folkestone Kent CT20 3BY - Change of use and conversion from existing bedsit accommodation to three self contained flats, together with external alterations.

Y15/0045/SH - 9 Tower Gardens Hythe Kent CT21 6DG - Works to trees situated within a conservation area comprising felling of a self sown Ash (T1) and a self sown Sycamore (T3); reduce a Bay (T2) back to previous pruning points (approximately 25%) and partial crown lift of a Holly (T4) to 5 metres.

Y15/0054/SH - 17 Military Road Hythe Kent CT21 5DD - Felling of a Cherry tree situated within a conservation area

Y15/0049/SH - Oaklands Stade Street Hythe Kent - Works to trees situated within a conservation area comprising the felling of two Elder and a Bay; 30% crown thin of a Holm Oak and 2 metre overall crown reduction and removal of one overhanging limb on east side of canopy of a Horse Chestnut.

Y15/0032/SH - Bankside Stone Street Stanford Ashford Kent - Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of two detached dwellings

Y15/0051/SH - 19 Radnor Cliff Folkestone Kent CT20 2JJ - Felling of a Sycamore and crown reduction of two Holm Oaks, all subject of Tree Preservation Order No. 4 of 2009

Y15/0030/SH - Hawkinge Youth Adventure Centre Elvington Lane Hawkinge Kent - Outline application for the erection of 76 residential units incorporating 0.93 ha of open space with matters of appearance, landscaping, scale and layout reserved for future considerations.

Representations can be made in writing either on line on the Council's website, by email to planning@shepway.gov.uk or in writing to the Head of Planning and Environmental Health, Shepway District Council, Civic Centre, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone, Kent, CT20 2QY. Please always quote the application reference number. Comments should be made in writing within 21 days from the date of publication. Please note that any representations received will be publically viewable on the Council's website.

Some applications can be viewed at other locations in addition to the Civic Centre, Folkestone. The applications are marked as follows:

- The One Stop Shop, Magpies, Church Approach, New Romney

+ - Hythe Town Council Offices, Stade Street, Hythe

The applications marked (*) do not accord with the provisions of the development plan in force in the area in which the land to which the application relates is situated.

Note: This is not a full list of applications received. All planning applications can be viewed and comments made online at <http://searchplanapps.shepway.gov.uk/online-applications/>.

C Lewis, Head of Planning and Environmental Health
Shepway District Council

Gills seek to keep up unbeaten form

Walsall clash tonight follows defeat in the cup during the week

Football

By Jamie Weir

jamie.weir@archant.co.uk

GILLINGHAM will look to keep their league revival going tonight when they travel to Walsall for an unusual 6pm Sunday kick-off.

Home league wins against Oldham and Coventry have given the club - still managerless since Peter Taylor was booted out at the end of last year - something to smile about and lifted them above the relegation zone.

Walsall are just one place and two points above the Gills. But the Kent side haven't won an away match yet this calendar year.

They will certainly be looking to build on the many positives midweek.

Thursday night's 1-1 draw away at Bristol City in the second leg of the Johnstone's Paint Trophy southern semi-final may have ended dreams of Wembley, but it left caretaker manager Andy Hessenthaler satisfied.

Trailing 4-2 after the first leg, the Gills always were facing a mountain to climb against a side that had already beaten them three times this season.

That task was intensified when the Gills found themselves 1-0 down after just 17 minutes. But 15 minutes later and winger Jermaine McGlashan



PRIESTFIELD: Can the Gills keep their unbeaten run going?

grabbed the goal to give the travelling fans hope.

Hessenthaler called the squad a 'credit to the football club'.

The former player-manager said: "I thought the boys were terrific. We started off a little bit slow but gradually grew into the game and we passed the ball really well with some good combination play all over the pitch."

"We said to them that they are a credit to the football club. This is not an easy place to come and without doubt they are the best team in the league."

"We were patient with the ball, sometimes we had to go back to go forwards, which worked for us and we created opportunities."

Added Hess: "We can't ask any more from the boys, we just said we can come up here in the league full of confidence and come away with something."

Now they travel to the West Midlands hoping to keep those spirits up.

Tonight's game has the unusual time of 6pm as a result of the Gills' cup game being televised live on Sky on Thursday.

Larger than life and hoping to get debut cap

GRAHAM Kitchener is larger than life, both literally and metaphorically.

Weighing in at an impressive 19-stone, and standing 6ft 6ins tall, the lock for Leicester Tigers has had an amazing season, becoming widely lauded as one of the most promising young players in the country to have not won a full cap.

But that could be all set to change on February 6, when the Six Nations tournament kicks off with England against Wales.

And Bromley born Kitchener could be taking to the field.

"The game against Wales is the one I'd really like to play. It's being held at the Millennium Stadium, which is meant to be really amazing with the retractable roof," he told Ko's this week.

"The other guys who have played there before have told me it's an amazing experience."

Despite being a Bromley native, he has limited memories of the area - he was whisked away as a child to be brought up in Shropshire.

"I always loved rugby, and wanted to play."

But young Kitchener - or Kitch as his teammates call him - strayed



MIGHTY: Kitchener powers through in his trademark scrum cap

from rugby a few times, playing schoolboy cricket for Shropshire, as well as sitting on the books of football's Wolverhampton Wanderers.

"I played football, and also cricket, but to be honest my heart was always with rugby. It suits my body type and size, and it's the sport I always loved and wanted to play really," explains Kitchener.

His current team, Leicester Tigers, will certainly be glad he returned to rugby as few other players have been as key at the line out or at stealing

possession from opponents.

Despite Kitchener's great form this season - being a modest man, he simply describes his play as 'good' - he still isn't guaranteed a place in the team, but is hopeful a space will be available for him.

"There have been a few injuries, so I'm hopeful I'm going to get into the team and get playing."

"I've been working hard, and feel really good right now, so I'd love the chance to get out there and play."

And the talented 25-year-old has the backing of others, with his fellow Leicester teammate Brad Thorn saying he would have been made an All Black by now had he been a Kiwi.

And Thorn knows what he's talking about, as the first man to win a rugby union World Cup, a rugby league Super League title and the Heineken Cup, making him one of the most successful rugby players of all time.

■ **Get behind-the-scenes news from Graham Kitchener and his England team-mates throughout the RBS 6 Nations with O2 Inside Line. First video goes live on Thursday, February 5. Search 'O2 Inside Line'.**

Defensive strength built up at Dynamos

INVICTA Dynamos have given their back row a boost, after picking up two new defensive signings.

The top of table team signed former Mos veteran Peter Beerling, who first donned a jersey for the side during the 2013-2014 season.

Head coach Kevin Parrish said the experienced defender would help steady the team.

He said: "Peter has stepped in for us before and is an experienced and assured head to be able to put back on the blue line. He does a good job with minimal fuss and is exactly the sort of character we need in the changing room as we head into the end of 2014/15."

Parrish also signed 23-year-old netminder Mark McGill.

He said: "Mark joins us having already sampled game day and the more rigorous training of the Elite League in his career and I'm sure that experience will prove invaluable as he looks to make an impression in the NIHL South."



KEVIN PARRISH: Making new defensive signings

Champ Shakey picks up prestigious trophy

FOUR-time British Superbike Champion Shane 'Shakey' Byrne has picked up yet another trophy; the coveted Royal Automobile Club Torrens Trophy.

The Sheppey-based British Kawasaki rider picked up the trophy for his outstanding performance which saw him crowned BSB champion against last year. The accolade has only been awarded eight times since its inception in 1978.

Shakey said: "It's a great achievement to win and be recognised by such an established and respected organisation as the Royal Automobile Club."

"It's been a fantastic year for me and the Rapid Solicitors Kawasaki team. I have won three of my four titles with Paul Bird Motorsport, and our aim is get the fifth title for 2015."

Barrie Baxter, chairman of the Torrens committee, said: "Motorcycle racing can be a very punishing discipline, which makes 'Shakey' Byrne's career all the more remarkable."

"The British series is now the



MIDAS: Even when he isn't riding, he's still taking gold

world's most competitive national championship, with top riders from across the globe.

"Byrne won the 2014 title in brilliant style, out-pointing three-time champion Ryuichi Kiyonari and became the first man in history to take the MCE Insurance British Superbike Championship on four occasions when he clinched the 2014 crown."

Dartford poker ace wins jackpot

DARTFORD'S Rapinder Cheema played his cards perfectly to be crowned champion in the Poker Stars UK and Ireland Poker Tour in London, at his first attempt.

The 34-year-old won the tournament - the UK's biggest poker event - beating 742 other players.

He took home a cool £78,825 in winnings after besting some of the

biggest names in the sport, including Jake Cody, who has accumulated over \$3,000,000 during his career.

Cheema didn't get off to a great start when he first tried his hand in the tournament, failing to qualify online initially.

After persevering he qualified during live play, making it through to the final six before he took the final pot.

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Model shown is ŠKODA Fabia Hatch SE 1.0 MPI 75PS £12,760 with race blue metallic pearlescent paint £535, panoramic sunroof package £600, sunset glass from B-pillar back £180, front LED running lights £190, front fog lights £170 and Savio alloys (aftersales accessories) £800. Total cost £15,235.

Official fuel consumption for the Fabia range in mpg (litres/100km): Urban 46.3 (6.1) to 72.4 (3.9); Extra Urban 67.3 (4.2) to 91.1 (3.1); Combined 58.8 (4.8) to 83.1 (3.4). CO₂ emissions for the Fabia range are 110 to 88 g/km. Standard EU test figures for comparative purposes and may not reflect real driving results.